This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

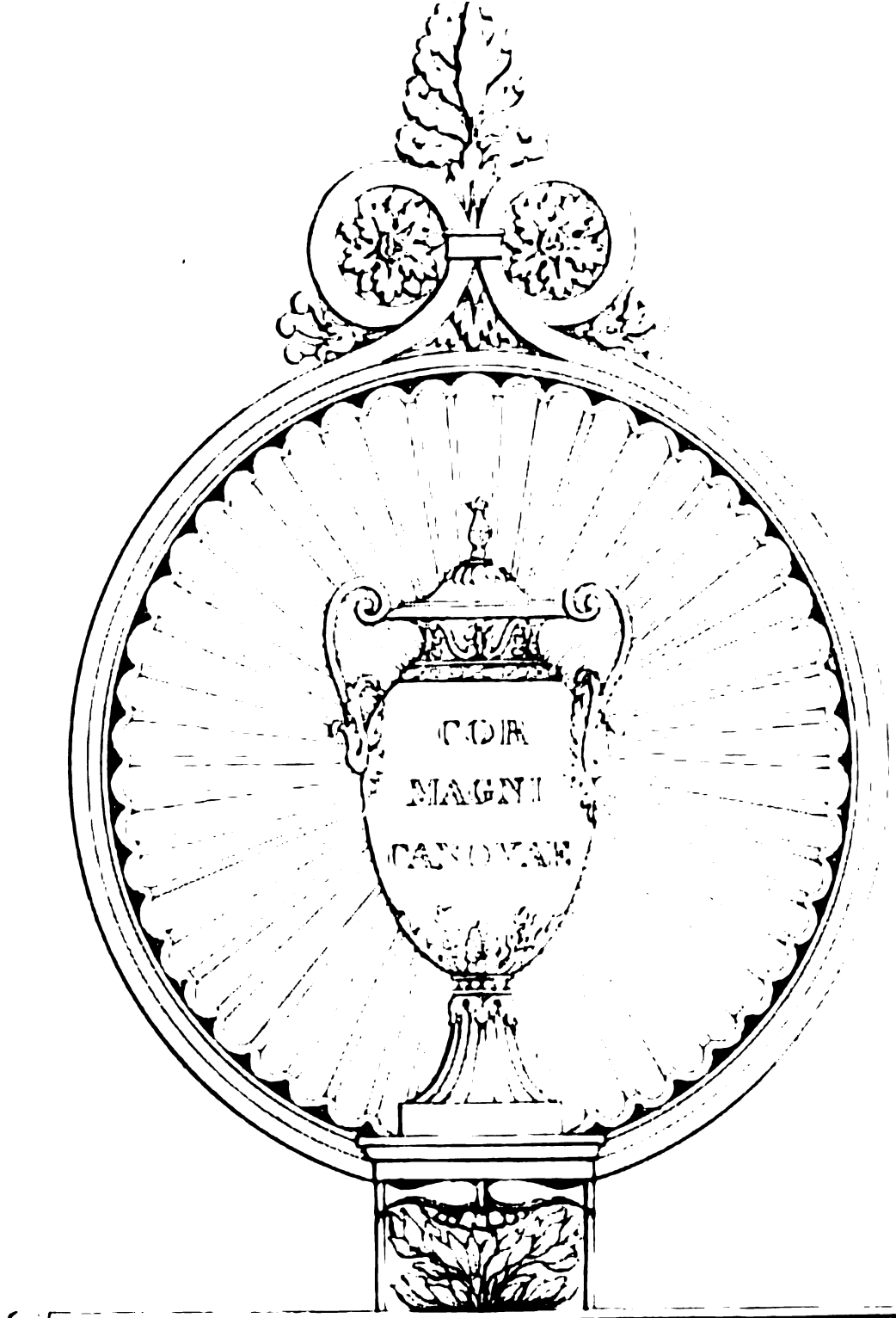
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



The works of Antonio Canova

Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi, Leopoldo Cicognara, Henry Moses, Melchior Missirini

Digitized by Google

From the
Fine Arts Library
Fogg Art Museum
Harvard University

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

WORKS

OF

ANTONIO CANOVA,

IN

SCULPTURE AND MODELLING,

ENGRAVED IN OUTLINE

BY HENRY MOSES;

WITH

DESCRIPTIONS FROM THE ITALIAN

OF THE

COUNTESS ALBRIZZI,

AND

A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

BY

CONUT CICOGNARA.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SEPTIMUS PROWETT.

M.DCCC.XXVIII.

Digitized by Google

FA 5107.1.6 (3)

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

THOMAS WHITE, PRINTER,
JOHNSON'S COURT.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

SUPPLEMENTARY Notice to the Biographical Memoir of Antonio Canova
Medals struck in honour of Canova.
Ground Plan and elevation of Canova's Church at Possagno.
Monument erected by the Academy of the Fine Arts at Venice in the hall of their Institution.
Thoughts on the Arts.

STATUES AND GROUPES.

1781. Apollo crowning himself.—A small statue in Carrara marble: executed for Prince Rezzonico, now in France in possession of Baron Daru.
1789. Adonis.—Part of a model which was broken up by the sculptor, preserving only this fragment.
1797. Apollo.—A small figure, belonging to Count Sommariva at Paris; it was taken from the model of the Cupid, sculptured in 1787.
1807. An Equestrian Statue of Napoleon, a model in clay, rather above the natural size.—The horse was raised to the colossal size in 1810, and was, some years after, cast in bronze for the statue of Charles III. of Naples.
1818. Charles III. of Naples.—A colossal equestrian statue, height twenty palms: cast in bronze by Signor Francesco Righetti. The horse is the one mentioned in the preceding article.
1819. Dirce.—A Bacchic nymph reclining on a goat-skin—a model. The execution in marble was not completed at the death of the Sculptor; in the possession of his Majesty.
1820. The Sleeping Nymph.—A model.
1821. A Colossal Horse—but differing from the former; intended for a statue of Ferdinand IV. of Naples.
1822. Endymion.—A marble statue: property of the Duke of Devonshire.
—— The Pietà.—A model.—A group of the dead Christ with the Virgin Mary and the Magdalen.

BUSTS.

1807. Pius VII.—A marble bust, presented to his Holiness by the Sculptor.
—— Cardinal Fesch.—A marble bust. Rome.
1812. Maria Elisa, Princess of Lucca, sister of Napoleon.
—— Murat, } Taken when King and Queen of Naples.
—— Madame Murat, }
1814. A Muse.—Executed for the Countess of Albany.
—— Guiseppe Bossi the Painter, executed gratuitously by Canova for the monument of Bossi at Milan.
—— Cimarosa, the Musical Composer. Now in the Museum of the Capitol.
1817. Ideal Female Heads, Nos. 1, 2, and 3.—Presented by the Sculptor to the Duke of Wellington, Lord Castlereagh, and Sir William Hamilton,—to each one, in the corresponding order.

Digitized by Google

1819. Tuccia the Vestal.—A herma or terminal head, the property of Frederick Webb, Esq.
1819. A Vestal.—A herma: in possession of Signor Luigi Uboldi, the banker at Milan.
—— Sappho.—A bust.
—— Philosophy.—A colossal herma; executed for Count Guilio Perticari, but afterwards given up to his late Holiness Pius VII.
1822. Madonna.—A bust, below the natural size, in possession of the noble family of the Patrizi at Rome.
—— Lucrezia D Este.—The property of Mr. Baring.
—— Count Cicognara.—A colossal bust, wanting the last touches. At Venice, in the possession of the Count.
—— Madame Recamier.—Left in the model.
—— Gio. B. Canova.—Not quite finished in the marble.

MONUMENTS.

1805. Model of a Monument for Victor Alfieri—in the studio of the Sculptor.
1807. Model, in little, of a monument to the memory of Lord Nelson.—A spontaneous tribute of the private admiration of the Sculptor for the British Hero.
1817. Sepulchral Monument of Cardinal York, with busts of the three last Stuarts, in mezzo-rilievo; erected in St. Peter's, by order and at the expence of his present Majesty.
—— Sepulchral Monument for an Unknown Person, with rilievos of two winged boys supporting a medallion, the portrait of a lady.
1818. Monument of Signor D. Manzoni, of Forli.
1822. Monument of the Marquess Salsa Berio, of Naples.

BAS RELIEFS.

1797. The City of Padua.—A monument in honour of Bishop Guistiniani, and placed in the building of the Congregazione de Carita at Padua.
—— Death of Adonis.
1800. The Descent from the Cross.—This model was executed in marble, by Antonio D'Este, for Count Widiman, and is now at Venice.
1822. Seven Rilievos for the Metopes of the Temple at Possagno, viz.
The Creation of the Sun, the Earth, and Moon.
The Creation of Man.
The Death of Abel.
The Sacrifice of Abraham.
The Annunciation.
The Visitation.
The Presentation.

Digitized by Google

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTICE TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF ANTONIO CANOVA.

Since the publication of the life of Canova, by Count Cicognara, a translation of which is prefixed to the first volume of this work, several publications on the same subject have been produced to the world; these, although coming from very respectable sources, and containing much interesting detail, do not, however, lay us under the necessity of being otherwise than very brief in our additional notice of this great sculptor; they, in fact, add little that is new and important to, much less do they invalidate, the brief, but correct and comprehensive, memoir of Cicognara. Few persons, who have been much the object of contemporary panegyric, will sustain so well as Canova the deductions and qualifications which allayed enthusiasm and a soberer criticism require; and it is sufficient proof of the solidity and originality of his merit that he has undergone this process, without any essential diminution of his fame as an artist, or as a man. The united testimonies of biographers and critics still fully accord to him the high merit of being the first who practically restored sculpture to the long for

Digitized by Google

saken paths of nature, and a due regard to the models of antiquity; and, as this priority in the application of just principles of art, is the solid basis of his fame, we shall avail ourselves of an extract in support of it from the ably-written work of his English biographer *:—"During the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century, a general movement of intellect, like the incipient heavings of a long becalmed ocean, was to be observed; but time elapsed before any motion animated the deep stagnation in which the fine arts languished; advances were rapidly made in philosophy—in literature—in works of utility; sculpture still remained debased and neglected. We have seen that the early studies of Canova were conducted solely by his own ideas of excellence, and directed by his own conceptions of the methods by which it was to be attained. When he removed from his native Venice, no impression had yet been made there; she even lay beyond the circle of improvement, and he left her without artists, and without academies, such as were established in several cities of Italy. For several years subsequently to his arrival in Rome, the same languor continued to prevail; and his own labours were the first to dispel the corruptions of taste, and to excite the tardiness of patronage. The propitious state of things, as now detailed, did not, therefore, aid in the slightest degree to form the genius or the style of this artist: it merely contributed to the favourable reception, and finally to the just appre-

* Memoirs of Canova, by J. S. Memes, A. M.

Digitized by Google

ciation of his works. The age was prepared in some measure to hail a reformer, but seemed incapable by its own energies of producing one. Canova at this crisis appeared, than whom, perhaps, no illustrious name ever owed less to external circumstances, in the cultivation of talents, or whose reputation is less dependent on splendid opportunities, not created by himself, of exerting them.

"The Roman then, as now, the only school of sculpture in Italy, was reduced to a few artists, whose sole employment consisted in making restorations of antiques for foreigners, or for the Museum of the Vatican; of these, many still remain, to show the wretched state of the art. If an entire work was attempted, it was merely a copy of some ancient statue; and if, by chance, an artist aspired to an original composition, it exhibited a performance, made up of plagiarisms from ancients and moderns, united with the unmeaning expression, extravagant action, and mannered execution of existing taste. Of all those who were at this time cotemporaries of Canova in Italy and consequently in Europe, no one could thus participate in the glory of that propitious revolution, which before the close of the century, his works had effected." With grounds of fame so deep and substantial, the criticism which removes all that is not sound and true, can tend only to strengthen and confirm his reputation, and should be courted rather than avoided. Compared, therefore, with the great masters of antiquity, it is not disputed that he shows a less vigorous conception—less ideal elevation, and sustained

Digitized by Google

majesty of character, while, on the other hand, it is adjudged that he fully equals them in fidelity of imitation, in natural expression, and in accuracy and purity of execution. The truth of the criticism is also allowed, which points out a somewhat too elaborate grace in some of his female figures—a slight over-stepping of that just medium in expression, which he himself so strongly recommended to the student, and so generally observed in his practice.* But this charge is not always made with justice; the little tricks and theatric graces which he has sometimes given to his dancing girls, bacchantes, &c. which are the instances that are pointed out of this fault, may, perhaps, in most cases, be justified on the score of appropriateness of character and natural effect. The only other criticism of any importance, is that of plagiarism from the ancients; this objection also, is one likely to be much overrated, being founded on certain obvious, but unessential, points of resemblance between some of Canova's statues and those of the antients on kindred subjects; this censure is, however, most frequently made by those who have not very attentively inquired into the nature and degree of originality to be expected in an art of so austere a genius, and so limited in its legitimate effects, as that of sculpture; which has already been carried to, perhaps, its highest possible degree of perfection by a highly-gifted people; themselves fettered by no precedents, and at liberty to establish standards of taste founded only on their own exquisite feeling

* Vide Thoughts on the Arts. Nos. VII. & VIII.

Digitized by Google

of the beautiful. The perfect and determinate models of the Greeks therefore, and the just prescriptive influence of their conventional modes of art, while they assist and ennoble modern sculpture, preclude it from originality in any of its essential points. But as the charge of plagiarism is a grave one in the arts, and as, among the very scanty written remains of Canova, there is a paper on this particular subject, it is introduced here, not only, however, as a piece of fine criticism and in point, but as serving also to show the mildness with which Canova replied to his somewhat captious critics:

"To some people," he observed, speaking of his statue of Mad[e] Letitia Buonaparte, "it appears a fault, my having had the idea of the Agrippina in my mind when I composed this statue; but is it not probable that the author of the Agrippina was himself guilty of the same thing, his work resembling so much the earlier statue of Menander?—let the Agrippina and my statue, however, be placed beside each other, and the difference will, at once, be seen. It is the same with my Perseus, in which the action would be thought like that of the Apollo, the two statues being seen separate; but confronting them dissipates the imagined resemblance, as a whole and in all their parts. It would be easy also to find in medals a posture resembling that of my Napoleon, yet I can solemnly assert that I had not seen any of them when I modelled that work; but if I had, my statue would not, therefore, be a copy or imitation of the ancients, and if their example is in support of my work, I am only pleased at it. Ancient statues

Digitized by Google

of divinities, Apollo and Mercury, Pallas and Diana, and the rest, remind us of each other by the sameness of their postures and attitudes; especially those of Venus, whether erect or recumbent, in which a certain uniformity and resemblance, in this respect, may be always observed—from all this we may infer that the varieties of simple and tranquil postures, especially in naked and erect figures, are much less numerous than those of violent and expressive postures. In the latter, any one may easily invent without fear of being charged with plagiarism: for in the ancients themselves there is no instance of a coincidence, in a violent or exaggerated subject, while in treating those which are of a simple and dignified character, they have almost invariably recurred to postures having a common resemblance, although the works in question were unlike in all other essential and important points. The Mercury and the Antinous of the Belvidere palace are much like the Meleager in respect of posture but in character and style the works are wholly different: on the other hand it is highly improbable that two artists, without previous communication, should coincide in the representation of a subject requiring violent and specific action, such as the supposed gladiator of the Borghese palace, or, still more, in the Discobulus—what I mean to say, therefore, is, that our art is not so rich in this respect as it is generally supposed to be; figures in repose do not afford much range for variety of attitude, and the slightest deviation from this rule leads us into affectation and mannerism."

Our design here being however limited to the no-

Digitized by Google

ticing of the most prominent criticisms on Canova, as a sculptor, we shall not proceed, by way of counter-statement to enumerate, even in the slightest manner, his many great and universally acknowledged excellencies: it must, indeed, we think, be wholly uncalled for, to insist upon the merit of an artist, whose works, by means of casts, copies, engravings, &c. are spread over Europe, in a degree exceeding all former example; every where received, by artists, as models, in that just style which unites the natural with the fine ideal of the ancient masters, and tending, generally, to awaken and diffuse, especially by the more lovely and graceful creations of his chissel, a taste for the ennobling, and innocent enjoyments of the fine arts. Proceeding therefore to notice, briefly, what has been said by his biographers on his character as a man, it may be stated that, whatever diversity of opinion has been expressed of him as an artist, they all fully agree upon this point, and unite in declaring, without qualification of any kind, their admiration and esteem of his private virtues—noble, disinterested, and actively benevolent he seems to have possessed the enviable lot of living in the constant exercise of the purest and most exalted feelings; and in the deep and placid enjoyment which attends the successful developement of inventive genius—the epithet of "the good," as often accompanied his name as that of "the great," and on the occasion of his death, "il buon Canova è morte," "the good Canova is dead," was uttered by every one with the deepest emotion, throughout the whole of Italy.

Digitized by Google

In this third volume are given the remainder of Canova's works, and it forms, with the two preceding volumes, a complete collection of his productions in sculpture and modelling; that is to say, of his principal works; for the excess in number, which the general catalogue of his works exhibits, will be found to consist of repetitions, usually with little material alteration, of busts, taken from full statues, detached figures from groups, or works, by a variety of causes, made unimportant or lost. The contents of this volume, though less generally known than those celebrated works by which, in the earlier part of his career, his fame was established, are not inferior to them in any respect, while in the opinion of judges of art, and of Canova himself, they in many instances exhibit traces of superiority, in respect to vigour of conception, and some of the severer beauties of art. This superiority might be naturally attributed to the improvement which may fairly be looked for in the maturity and full developement of the powers of an artist, proceeding always on the true principles of his art: another cause, however, furnished by his visit to England in 1815, and perhaps the principal motive of it, is alleged by his friends and the connoisseurs at that time to have contributed powerfully to this effect. This is the actual inspection, which he then made, of the marbles of the Parthenon, now in the British Museum: being previously acquainted with the works of Phidias, only by few and imperfect fragments, casts, and the drawings of them given in the travels of Stuart, in Greece. On this occasion, he afterwards declared to a friend, " he was at first

Digitized by Google

sight struck with astonishment, seeing in them so close an imitation of nature, that he should have thought them modelled from the life, if they had not been above the natural size;" but as the letter which he wrote from London to his friend M. Quatremère de Quincy, at Paris, is chiefly on this and other topics connected with England, it will, perhaps, be found interesting by the English reader, and is, besides, an example of the ardent and ingenuous character of the writer.

London, Nov. 9th, 1815.

Here am I in London, dear and best friend, a wonderful city, handsome streets, handsome squares, handsome bridges, great neatness, and what is still more striking is, the well-conditioned state of man, which every where presents itself around. I have seen the marbles arrived from Greece. Of the bas-reliefs, we had some idea from engravings, casts, and the few fragments of the marbles themselves with us, but of the full colossal figures, in which an artist can display his whole power and science, we have known nothing. Whether these marbles be the works of Phidias himself, executed under his guidance, or finished only by his hand, they shew clearly that the great masters of antiquity were faithful imitators of select and beautiful nature: they had no affectation, nothing exaggerated or hard; that is to say, none of those parts which may be called conventional, or sacrifices to general rules and proportions, I am led to believe, therefore, that our numerous ancient statues which are marked with these exaggerations, are, in fact, only copies of the productions of their great

Digitized by Google

masters, made by mediocre Greek artists, in order to be sent to Rome. The figures of Phidias are all real and living flesh, that is to say, are beautiful nature itself; as the other masterpieces of ancient art also are: the Belvedere Mercury, is real flesh—the Torso is so too, and the fighting Gladiator, so likewise is the Satyr of Praxiteles and his Cupid, of which fragments are found in all directions. The Venus also is real flesh; and a Venus here, in the British Museum, is true and perfect flesh. I must confess that, in seeing these beautiful things, I felt my self-love gratified, for I have always thought that the great masters of antiquity must have worked in this style and no other: do not suppose, either, that the bas-reliefs of the same temple of Minerva are in a different style; they too consist of the fine forms of select nature and of living flesh; for men have always been made of soft elastic flesh, not of bronze.—Such authorities should surely be enough to determine sculptors to give up all rigidity of manner, and to imitate rather the soft and beautiful surfaces of nature."

This volume, besides the works of Canova as a sculptor, will contain a collection of his "Thoughts on the Arts," for an account of which we refer the reader to the notice prefixed to them. The value and interest attached by his countrymen to this little code of art, as it is entitled by his friend the Abate Missirini, are grounds to hope that it will be acceptable to the English artist, and also to other readers, for whom, by the general absence of abstruse or technical matter, it is not unfitted. We have also given the medals, which have been struck, on various occasions,

Digitized by Google

in honor of Canova: they are contained in four plates, and accompanied by brief explanatory notices. Of the two other plates, not representing the works of the sculptor, the one presents the ground plan and the elevation of the magnificent church erected at Possagno; to the building of which Canova devoted his entire fortune, the fruits of all his labours. It is rendered yet more interesting by being the depository of his mortal remains, although he never gave any indication, not even the slightest, of desiring or expecting it to be made his tomb; his friends, however, could not fail to make so appropriate a choice, adding, thereby, so affecting an interest to this splendid edifice, and acting also by it, so much in unison with the fond wishes and recollections which Canova always entertained for his native village.

The other plate is a representation of the interesting monument which the Venetian Academy of the fine arts have placed in the hall of their institution. It is the heart of Canova, enclosed in a porphyry vase, which is set with appropriate ornaments. On a tablet beneath, is inscribed,

QUOD. MUTUI. AMORIS. MONUMENTUM
IDEM. GLORIÆ. INCITAMENTUM. SIET.

And on the vase itself is this simple inscription:

COR MAGNI CANOVÆ.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEDALS STRUCK IN HONOUR OF ANTONIO CANOVA.

1st. This medal, engraved by Gazzini, was decreed to Canova by the Venetian senate, as a mark of their approbation of the monument, executed by him in memory of their celebrated Admiral, Angelo Emo; on one side is represented the monument of Emo, and on the other an appropriate inscription.

2nd. A medal, also executed by Gazzini at the charge of the Chevalier Girolamo Zulian, on the occasion of his being presented by Canova with the statue of Psyche, holding her hand the butterfly; the obverse presents the head of Canova, the reverse the statue above-mentioned.

3rd. A medal, the work of Putinati, struck at Milan, in honour of Canova, as the most distinguished ornament of his age in the arts; on one side is the profile of the sculptor, on the other the winged cap of Mercury, and the head of Minerva, encircled by a serpent, symbol of his immortal fame.

4th. A medallion, engraved by Salvatore Passamonti, on occasion of the recovery from the French, of the works of ancient art taken from the Roman Museums. This memorial of that glorious event, in which Canova acted so important a part, presents on the obverse his features, and on the reverse the Apollo di Belvedere—one of the recovered works.

5th. Another medallion, by the same artist, in honour of Canova's famous colossal group of the furious Hercules hurling Lychas into the sea; one side presents the portrait of the sculptor, the other the group above-mentioned.

Digitized by Google

6th. A medal, by Putinati, voted by the Athenæum of Treviso, on the occasion of the placing there of the bust of Canova; it consists of the head of Canova, and an appropriate inscription.

7th. A medal, engraved by Girometti, to gratify the desire which prevailed with all descriptions of artists, of possessing a lasting memorial of the features of Canova, the restorer of sculpture in modern times; it accordingly presents on the obverse the portrait of Canova, and on the reverse an inscription corresponding to its purpose.

8th. A medal, also by Girometti, commissioned by the Roman Academy of San Luca, who were desirous of marking by this splendid memorial the sense they entertained of the loss of their perpetual president. Impressions were distributed to all the municipal authorities, and to the members of the various societies of science, literature, and arts, who attended the solemn funeral rites of the sculptor, celebrated in the church of the Holy Apostles at Rome. It consists of the head of Canova on the one side, and of a brief inscription on the reverse.

Digitized by Google

THOUGHTS ON THE ARTS,
BY ANTONIO CANOVA.

"The knowledge which an artist has of his subject, will more than compensate for any want of elegance in the manner of treating it; and I am convinced that one short essay written by a painter will contribute more to advance the theory of our art than a thousand volumes, such as we sometimes see, the purpose of which appears to be rather to display the refinement of the author's own conceptions of impossible practice, than to convey useful knowledge of any kind whatever."—*Sir Joshua Reynolds, Disc. 15th.*

It may be proper to notice here, that these "Thoughts on the Arts," although virtually, and in substance the work of Canova's mind—the result of his genius and experience, were not actually committed to writing and published by him, but are, in fact, notes of opinions and criticisms on the subjects, chiefly of painting and sculpture, uttered by Canova on various occasions in conversation and taken down, unknown to him, with a view to their future publication, by a friend. This friend was the Abate Missirini, Secretary to the Academy of St. Luke at Rome, whose private and literary character fully guarantee the genuineness and correctness of these interesting fragments; he had also the amplest opportunity for effecting the purpose which his zeal for Canova's memory prompted him to

Digitized by Google

undertake; afforded him by their friendship, habits of daily intimacy, and similarity of tastes and pursuits; and also in these circumstances a preservative against any misapprehension of the scope and meaning of his friend's remarks. The Abate speaks as follows, on the subject of these "Pensieri Sull'arte," as he has entitled them.

"Having, by good fortune, the opportunity of being daily in the society of this great artist, when he was accustomed to speak much and confidentially to me on the particulars of his art, to which indeed he was so much devoted that he rarely discoursed on any other subject, and being also present on many occasions when he treated on these topics before others, it occurred to me to undertake to collect and preserve his aphorisms on these subjects, and accordingly I made notes of them at the time for that purpose. . . . It is by this means that I am enabled to present the reader with this little code of the arts, reminding him at the same time that they were uttered in the unpremeditated freedom of friendly conversation, and not with the circumspect and authoritative tone of one delivering infallible rules and dogmas." Subsequently, however, Canova, came to the knowledge of what his friend had done, and of his future design; and had even given his sanction to the publication, during his life, of his remarks so unstudiedly and unsuspectingly uttered; modestly requiring only that they should be veiled in the fiction of being an old manuscript lately discovered in the archives of the academy of San Luca. It is well known that Canova himself never wrote with a view to publication on the

Digitized by Google

arts; in a letter to a friend, Count Cicognara,* he says, "you will be surprised when I tell you that I have never written a single line on the subject of my art; I have, however, always had an intention of so doing, but have not yet found the moment for carrying it into effect; perhaps at some future time I may." This intention was never carried into effect further than by a brief analysis of some of his works addressed to a friend, among whose papers, it is to be much regretted, a few remains only of those valuable writings were found; this circumstance adds greatly to the value and interest of this little collection, which now affords the only authentic means of tracing out those higher and more peculiar principles, on which he proceeded to the attainment of so much excellence in the arts, and which, without the light of his written opinions, would be known to us only by their admirable effects. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that these "Thoughts on the Arts," being in substance mere notes of occasional conversations, are not susceptible with any advantage of order or classification —no attempt either has been made to alter their free and colloquial manner; both for the sake of fidelity and for preserving the evidences with which they abound, of the ardent and ingenuous character of their author.

I.

Although an ardent promoter of the fine arts, Canova beheld with much concern the vast number of young people, who devoted themselves to them as a pursuit. "These," he said, "cannot fail of being poor and disappointed. Now that Italy and all

* Author of the 'Storia della Scultura.'

Digitized by Google

Europe are full to repletion with works of art, what can all these young students expect? the worst is that they will tend by their numbers to keep up a worthless mediocrity—for excellence was never the heritage of the many—and in these times nothing short of excellence should be thought of. Academies, therefore, should indeed afford to every one an opportunity of proving his talents, but in every case of the absence of a decided aptitude for the arts, the pupil should be induced to relinquish them, and to apply to a pursuit more likely to promote his own and the public benefit; for I fear that this superabundance will begin to incline to the wrong road, and by its overpowering influence carry away with it those who are capable of better things; and when once right principles are deviated from, every extravagance will follow, (for the arts when in the wrong path are not to be restrained,) and will end in a total depravation of taste."

II.

"We do not call a work beautiful," he observed, "merely because it is free from defects; the most sublime productions of art are not without faults, and yet are admirable; for besides the beauty which satisfies the judgment, they possess a beauty which is derived from inspiration, which captivates the senses and subdues the heart. They are all life and feeling; we cannot gaze on them without emotions of joy, sorrow, or tenderness—this is real beauty."

III.

"In execution," he said, "I endeavour always to effect my purpose by the simplest and most direct means; that stroke I consider best which most ad-

Digitized by Google

vances my work. I avoid, therefore, every thing that is merely ornamental, or that tends to distract from, or to retard my object.

IV.

He recommended to the pupil the imitation of nature itself, and not of the works of any particular master, "unless that master will point out to you; how nature should be studied, and how it has been viewed and imitated by himself; in this case study nature with his eyes, and take care that it is the nature of antiquity, and particularly of the Greek masters, for these had, above all other people, advantages for the observations and imitation of nature, and knew how to use them to the surpassing of all others in the arts. But if you must needs imitate a master, especially in painting, regulate yourself in the imitation of him as in that of nature herself, that is as you select the most perfect forms alone from nature, so in the works of your master select those points only in which he excels, and reject those in which he has shewn himself a mere mortal; but it too often happens that the faults of great masters are the parts most imitated."

V.

"You have, perhaps, sought in nature for some particular beauty or perfection, and have not been able to meet with it: do not give it up, examine further the human form, and you will find it; nature contains every variety, if you knew where to look for it."

VI.

"If you would save yourself much future trouble, and proceed always with confidence in your art, I will

Digitized by Google

tell you the shortest way. Make yourself perfect, in the first place, in all the requisites of your art—as drawing, anatomy, a sense of the graceful and the dignified—understand and feel the beautiful; let your sensibility and imagination also be awakened, and exercised; the previous possession, in short, of all the parts necessary in your art is the shortest way to which I alluded. If you take care to do this, the first perception which strikes you of any object transcendently beautiful and graceful will serve your purpose, all the other qualities you possess will be called into play in support of, and in accordance with the sublime idea you have formed, and harmonising with it, produce a beautiful and perfect whole; but this, you say, is difficult, and so indeed I know it is, and therefore I point out the necessity of study and labour if you would become great; when these have produced their effects it will no longer appear difficult to you."

VII.

"In the commerce of the world," he observed, "I have always seen polished manners have greater influence than harshness and severity, and that grace is a charm which subdues all hearts. You may reckon that the same effect is produced by it in the arts: acquire a graceful style, and you will please every body; but this requires care; for as he who in society affects a grace denied to him by nature, becomes ridiculous, so the artist who is over studious of the graceful, not only fails to please, but creates disgust; be careful then to observe in this respect the just degree: this I say to you, supposing that you possess innately the principles of grace; but if you

Digitized by Google

are by nature insensible to this fascinating quality, give up the pursuit of it, for you have nothing to hope for by it; aim rather at the severer beauties of art, for the austere style has also its triumphs."

VIII.

"And in expression I would equally recommend you to observe this just medium of which I have spoken, and that it should always be unforced, natural and temperate; this will be the test of the soundness of your judgment and taste; any degree of forcedness is deformity: it was justness of expression which distinguished Raffaello among all his competitors in the imitation of beauty."

IX.

Conversing on one occasion with several eminent persons, Canova observed, that "Sculpture is only one among the variety of languages, and is that with which the artist eloquently expresses nature; it is the heroic style as the tragic is that of poetry. As terror, also, is the chief element of tragedy, so the naked human form is that of sculpture, and as in heroic poetry, the most just and noble diction is required, so the naked in statuary should express itself only by the most choice and beautiful forms. It is in this respect—the execution—that the chief analogy of the arts and letters exists; for while the invention and composition require always the strictest fidelity to nature and truth, it is only in the style and the execution that, leaving the ordinary forms of common life, the imagination is at liberty to adorn its subject with the most noble and attractive graces that nature or an inspired fancy can supply."

Digitized by Google

X.

He held that no emolument is more legitimately acquired than that of the fine arts; because no one is compelled by necessity to purchase works of art: "they are in fact mere luxuries, any one can do without them, and the buyer only spontaneously indulges his taste and desires in the acquisition of them; from which it follows, that at whatever price they are estimated, it cannot, however great, be properly deemed exorbitant."

XI.

"Rules and measured proportions are certainly, when just, of universal application, and the artist who has not great reliance on himself, does right to be wholly guided by them. Great artists, however, sometimes depart from these rules, and with good effect; and in this consists the highest efforts of judgment and science: for such men can use with advantage the license, which Aristotle allows to the poet, to prefer a slights pecious deviation from truth to a strict adherence to it when it would destroy the proposed effect. The Niobe, for example, is clothed in wet drapery, as are also many other antique statues; this is not exact or probable truth, but if the artist had not adopted it, he must have sacrificed his art by the unbecoming concealment of the forms; he chose, therefore, rather to adopt an improbability which enabled him to produce a beautiful effect, making the figure apparent under the wet and clinging drapery, and losing none of the resources of his art. In like manner, Glicon, to express with greater force the strength of his Hercules, has given him a

Digitized by Google

bull neck; and the sculptor of the Apollo di Belvedere, to give an air of greater freedom and agility, has made one shoulder higher than the other, thereby throwing back the drapery, and has also made the legs and thighs too long for the torso. But these violations of proportion did not proceed from ignorance, but from the profound judgment and science of the artist in regard to effect and the point of sight."

XII.

The only important elements of sculpture, he used to say, are perfection of design and excellency of forms; a picture without these may still be good, in respect to colouring, invention, freedom of touch and effect; but if you take away expression and form from sculpture, what is left?—a piece of marble.

XIII.

Consider then how necessary it is that the sculptured form should be preeminently beautiful, since it has in most cases, to achieve its triumphs with a single figure—to move and persuade by a sentence; must not, therefore, this figure, this expression, be sublime.

XIV.

"It is, indeed, necessary," he observed to some young artist, "to have a knowledge of anatomy; but an obvious display of it should be avoided, if it be true that art should imitate nature; let us also follow nature in this respect, which in order to conceal the harsh muscular parts of our frame has admirably covered them with a soft clothing of flesh and of skin: presenting only to the eye a smooth superficies, deli-

Digitized by Google

cately moulded with rising and indented curves, wholly without harsh inequalities."

XV.

He recommended to young painters, an early and assiduous exercise of the pencil, a practice which produced so many excellent artists in the Venetian School. Also not to neglect studies from the living model, and never to forget, when drawing from the life, that it is a living subject which they are copying, and therefore, that life must be infused into their drawing of it. "In order, however, to raise and correct these individual forms, compare them with the models of antiquity, that is, let your view of your subject be regulated by the taste and principles of the ancient masters." This advice, however, was given to young artists well advanced in their art.

XVI.

"Pity that this nymph cannot speak," said an English visitor in the studio of Canova, "and that this Hebe does not rise into the skies; if, like Pigmalion's statue, life were added to them, nothing would remain to be desired." "You are mistaken," observed the sculptor, "and would in that case have nothing to be pleased or surprised at. I do not aim in my works at deceiving the beholder; we know that they are marble—mute and immobile; I am content, if it is felt that I have subdued in some degree the stubborn material by my art and made it approximate to the life. If my work were indeed taken for the reality, it would no longer be admired as a work of art, and the skill of the artist would be unnoticed. I am interested, therefore, in its being remembered, that it is marble;

Digitized by Google

a consideration of the difficulties of the material being necessary to an appreciation of the powers of the artist. I would excite the fancy only, not deceive the eye."

XVII.

" How fortunate it is," he often remarked, " that but few artists are able to express themselves with propriety and effect with the pen; else what long and mighty wars should we have between the cultivators of the arts; and how much time misspent to the loss of their proper pursuits. Those who were in the habit of writing were always mediocre artists, the pencil, not the pen, is their proper instrument, and working, not writing, their vocation. Literary men on the other side, are equally out of their element when deciding on questions of mere art; and the fanciful errors which they fall into, are an ample revenge for the intended victims of their criticisms."

XVIII.

When even the very striking excellencies of his works failed to silence the envy and detraction of which he was the object. " These critics," he said, " point out the defects of my works, and of this I do not complain, for I am not unaware of their faults and deficiencies; but what vexes and afflicts me is, that I have not been able to withdraw the eye from the defects by the beauties which perhaps I have been able to give to my works: but still with all my faults I cannot help thinking, that if a head, an arm, or torso of some of my statues were dug up, and believed to be an antique, they would all begin hold-

Digitized by Google

ing forth on the wonders of antiquity. The ancients truly have great privileges! We allow ourselves to see their beauties alone, while works of moderns are scrutinized solely to detect their faults; I have read the same remark in Tacitus of his day."

XIX.

Even when a work was finished he would still fondly linger over it; which being remarked, he replied, "there is nothing I value more than my time, and you know how I economize it; but when it comes to the point of finishing a work, and leaving it, I feel always a strong desire to advance it nearer, if I can, to perfection,—fame is not attained by the number of our works, but rather by a few that are excellent. I am always striving to find in my marble a something of life and spirituality, the animation of a soul: the mere imitation of cold form gives me a deathlike chill; I feel it necessary to add mind to it, and to borrow from inspiration that nobleness of form, and those appearances of life which I want; but I do not satisfy myself."

XX.

"When we apply ourselves to the study of the great examples of Grecian art, in order to possess ourselves of their manner of expressing their conceptions, that is to say, of their execution, it seems to me necessary to consider the maxims of art they had established; to search carefully the ends which they proposed to themselves to effect, and the means by which they reached those ends; and also to discover the principles on which they regulated the imitation

Digitized by Google

of nature; this would enable us to give to our works that union of truth, with ideal beauty, which distinguishes the antique."

XXI.

Speaking of the quality which gives to the work of the sculptor's hand, the look of life, and the irradiation of mind, he said, "When I examine the great works of antiquity, I see that the artists aimed at giving life and expression to the look and attitudes, rather than to the drapery; but in our modern works it appears to me that the spirit and movement are all thrown into the dress instead of into the person itself; hence, it is, that in the antique the figure is eloquent, and the drapery silent and subservient, while in modern works of art the dress assumes a prominent character, and the figure remains cold and sunk in the marble; this inverted order has been, I think, the principal cause of the retrogradation of art."

XXII.

On the subject of his having declined to execute the busts of many illustrious persons he said, "I am not willing to give myself up to portraits, I prefer rather to excrcise the loftier functions of my art: and when one has produced a portrait on just and scientific principles, what is the recompense? the friends of the original come to see it, and declare that justice has not been done to him, and that they hardly know it for him; the poor sculptor then is pulled to pieces, and some sorry artist perhaps triumphs over him. Who would chose to expose himself to such criticism? every one has a peculiar manner of seeing a coun-

Digitized by Google

tenance; it is therefore, impossible to please all. I think, however, that, if I had applied myself to this branch of art I should have simplified the means of it, and not wasted my efforts on the minute and unimportant parts of the countenance; these may all, with wonderful patience be exactly imitated without producing a good likeness. Resemblance is, I think, produced by the larger and more general parts, and by bringing out the leading features alone: the excellency of this method, I think, consists in seeing these important features with the eye of a painter of history, and in the most felicitous point of view, so that the portrait may be ennobled without sacrificing the resemblance, and possess both truth and beauty, although not beautiful in nature;—for if the object of the arts is indeed the developement of beauty it must be a cruel violation of their nature to copy deformity."

XXIII.

Noticing some young painters, who attempted nothing beyond the style of those early masters who made the first advances in the art, he said, " I fully approve of your beginning with a simple and natural style, for this is the way in which our greatest artists proceeded. But this simplicity should go on to acquire more nobleness of character, and in its further progress should have its boldness too, founded, however, on judgment, inspired by genius, and embellished by taste. If art had not advanced beyond its early simplicity it would still have been in its infancy, and the mighty works of Michel Angelo and of Raffaello would not have been produced."

Digitized by Google

XXIV.

Being asked why, on the decline of ancient art, architecture had not fallen in so great a degree as the rest, he replied, " In painting and sculpture the artist should always proceed with circumspection, and be aware of his liability to err from right principles, for these arts depend on the guidance of taste and genius, and not on that of exact rules, as it is the case in architecture. Taste and genius, however, operate by means that are too subtle and evenescent to be reduced to exact terms; while it is the nature of architecture to admit of fixed and invariable rules, and proportions; this is, I think, the chief reason why architecture suffered less than her two sister arts in the general decline of taste. My art has none of these guides and privileges, and is never unaccompanied with a certain fear of erring; so that I am always afraid to take any liberty with it, and stand constantly on my guard; sometimes I almost feel inclined to return to my early studies, and to begin to copy again from the life."

XXV.

The painters of Rome were constantly in the habit of consulting Canova about their studies, finding many of them impressed with a feeling of there being something almost superhuman in their art, he said by way of encouragement, " Young and timid artists are apt to believe that their art is something very profound and mysterious, as was taught, it is said by Mengs to his pupils: according to him it was necessary in order to be a great artist, to soar into Paradise, and fill the imagination with the most subtle

Digitized by Google

and refined ideas." "This transcendental doctrine," he added, "may be of some use in sculpture, but not in painting. The great Venetian masters, with a simplicity and a facility of execution, which seemed almost like trifling with their subject, produced wonders in their art. Over refinement leads only to the false and fanciful; our old painters never thought of refining except in the execution; their struggle was in the actual imitation of truth, beauty, and the human affections, and they produced classical works. Fine judgment, the gift of the Creator, conferred however on few, is the only secret power of the arts as it is in every other species of excellence." This remark he was in the habit of repeating frequently.

XXVI.

On seeing the rich collection of the marbles of Egina, which were confided to the celebrated Thorwaldson for restoration, Canova stated, as his opinion, that they were valuable, certainly, as specimens of ancient ornamental sculpture; calculated, however, rather to gratify curiosity than to be profitable to the arts. "I myself am proud of being a worshipper of antiquity; but still I do not blindly idolize every thing ancient; these marbles would, as rare pieces of antiquity, be a splendid addition to a museum, but not to an academy, for the purposes of study. I was told they were beautiful models for imitation, as being characterised by their fidelity to nature, and I find, indeed, that nature is accurately given in them; but it is ordinary nature, such as is found in common, not that choice and beautiful nature, which science and taste alone can select;

Digitized by Google

common nature is imitated only by artists without taste or elevation; if this kind of nature is to be copied, it should surely be done from the life itself, and not from any imitation of it, which always falls short in some degree of the original. They certainly, therefore, do not appear to me to be models for study or imitation however venerable and curious for their antiquity and the people that produced them. They had, I believe, like the Egyptians, a prescribed hard style of sculpture, from which they never varied, notwithstanding the improvement effected by Phidias Alcamene and Praxiteles. "I would ask," he said in conclusion, "if any great artist, though praising these works to the skies, would be proud to be believed the author of them."

XXVII.

A sort of mania having arisen at Rome, among painters, of devoting themselves to the production of a sort of petty illusion in perspective, to the neglect of history, and the grand and beautiful of art. Canova said, "A great artist thinks more of future fame than of present applause. Shame to him,who is content with pleasing only for his day, and by a faulty style of art too: if our famous old painters had been content with this, their names would not now sound so loftily as they do; they produced their works on principles which will exist in all times, and among every people, being founded on nature, which is always the same." This he said to those who seemed inclined to promote by their example a departure from sound principles. "A mercenary spirit," he added, "indolence in the search of what is truly beautiful; the love of rapid

Digitized by Google

production, and the meanness of flattering some worthless professors of art—these are the causes that so many adopt this fleeting means of applause—an eternal oblivion will be their punishment."

XXVIII.

A gentleman admiring one day the Venus of Canova in his workshop, and fancying that the most exquisite living models must have supplied those perfect forms, begged as a great favour to be allowed to see some of these celestial beauties. The sculptor promised to indulge his wishes, and a day was fixed on for the purpose; at the time appointed the gentleman, full of the highest expectations, was punctually at the studies of the artist; when, to his astonishment, he found the original Venus almost ugly instead of beautiful. Canova smiled at his disappointment, and told him that it will be in vain to look for perfect beauty with the material eyes alone; mind, informed by the maxim, of ideal beauty is also necessary; the model will then appear to you not such as it really is, but such as it should be in your work, and will serve your purpose, by merely suggesting the points of beauty: the object before you will thus guide and arrange the conceptions of the mind, while this will add to it the spirit of ancient art, the choice forms of nature, refined taste, judgment and feeling. When you have then informed your mental vision, you may set to work without distrust, you will overcome every difficulty, and convert your ordinary models into beautiful works. This is what I would do myself, and feel my incapacity of attaining to it in proportion to my sense of its necessity; my mental vision is not

Digitized by Google

powerful enough within me to subdue the rigid material on which I work, and so I remain the mere mortal which I am."

XXIX.

On the subject of those masters who oblige their pupils to adopt a particular style and character, either of severity or grace, hardness or delicacy, he said, "the principles of art are universally applicable, being founded in our common nature, but genius and temperament gives to every one in the execution a peculiar character and originality which should always be left uncontrolled; every one should in this respect obey his own natural temper and genius, and neither thwart or neglect their dictates. Any violence in this respect is applying the lopping and dislocating process of the tyrant's bed to the genius of the pupil, who, even if you should force him to adopt a manner uncongenial to him would always have a tendency to return to his natural taste and manner."

XXX.

Being asked, "which are the most essential rules in the imitative arts," he replied, "I think the code of art may be much abbreviated, or rather may be comprised in one single rule, which is this, the artist should be able to give an exact account of every thing he does, and why he does it; sometimes," he added, "A single fold of drapery gives me more trouble than a whole statue, because I cannot make it fall so that I can account for the particular turn and flow it has taken; if, therefore, an artist wishes to be able to justify his work, in the first place to himself, and afterwards to others, he must be able to give good

Digitized by Google

reasons for the invention, the action, the expression, execution, in short for all the parts of his work which are referable to principles and rules of art, for other parts are not reducible to rules, such as grace, sublimity, genius. If he can act on this compendious principle he will need no other rules; good judgment is the great and only guide in the arts."

XXXI.

" In execution," he said, " it is not the large and leading parts alone that are productive of grandeur of style, for these, however grand in themselves, may be dry and poor in effect; it is the principal parts uniting with the intermediate parts, with a delicately just and flowing union, and harmonizing with breadth and sublimity into one whole that constitutes the grand style."

XXXII.

On the subject of the relative merits and difficulties of painting and sculpture, he expressed pity and contempt at the folly of wasting in so idle a contention time which might be much better employed in practising those arts. " All this warmth," he said, " arises from the question, not having been properly stated, for in regard to the origin of these arts, painting was perhaps more difficult, being more complicated in its elements than sculpture; but music and perspective also were in this respect attended with more difficulty than sculpture; when once, however, the rules of music and perspective were discovered, the application of them was easy, because dependant of fixed principles, which once known required only the exercise of ordinary talents and industry; for we see

Digitized by Google

even boys learn the rules of music, and practise them with effect; and artists, also of very middling talents, by a knowledge of the mere rules of perspective, do great things in that way; no one would, however, think of comparing a painter of scenery with even an indifferent history painter. The merit is rather in the discovery of these rules, than in the application of them. If, therefore, we would fairly try the question, we must suppose painting already provided with its rules and science, and then comparing it with sculpture, see which requires the highest powers to practise. It is certain that painting is much facilitated by the discovery of principles which may be taught; in sculpture this is not the case, at least in so great a degree. While on the other hand its origin is so obvious, that all people, and even children amuse themselves with making figures of men in clay, but have no power to make advances from these first rude efforts.

XXXIII.

One of the points in which he considered painting to have a greater facility than sculpture was the drapery. "In all cases it is necessary that the dress should accommodate itself to the motion of the figure, and particularly of the muscular parts; it is this which gives to the figures of Raffaello and the old masters so much lightness and freedom; the form beneath is always perceivable. This rule is equally applicable to the painter and to the sculptor, but the latter has still more to attend to; for the painter it is enough to arrange the folds in that aspect, which is

Digitized by Google

to be presented in his picture; he only studies one point of view, and the rest is of no consequence to him; the drapery, perhaps, which is arranged so gracefully before, would, if seen behind, produce there a quite contrary effect. The sculptor has not this facility; the drapery in his work must be arranged with equal attention at the back and sides, and in the front. You see then how much more difficult it is to do this; and it is not enough too, that the dress be adjusted elegantly to the action of the figure, the sculptor must also be able to point out the cause of the fall and flow which it has taken in his work; he added also in regard to the treatment of drapery," it must not be supposed that the folds should be always of one character, for as every variety of person requires its proper forms so the fold should vary in accordance with the material and with the nature of the subject. The management of the folds in drapery is commonly the great difficulty of even the greatest sculptors, for it is not with the dress as with the naked figure, the type and principles of which are in nature and invariable, taking which for our guide we are sure to be right; for the fold and flow of the drapery depends often on causes too slight and fleeting to be traced or detected, and is also a matter of taste which is in this point subject to great variety. There are no precise rules indeed for the treatment of drapery, often the most successful instances of it have arisen from accidental notice of a lucky combination of dress: the best rule is to observe the fleeting play of dress wherever we meet with it. Thus, it is

Digitized by Google

that the life of an artist is one continual study, and he often acquires valuable knowledge, even when strolling at his ease along the streets.

XXXIV.

Returning to the subject of a scrupulous adherence to rules, he said " it is desirable, because it guards against arbitrary and capricious errors, and keeps the artist attentive to his duties; but still, sometimes by a too obsequious obedience to rules and proportions the effect is sacrificed, and without effect there can be no illusion which is the essential object in the arts. It was a principal study of the ancients to obtain effect, and they did not scruple to sacrifice rules, when necessary, to that end; and this was not ignorance or error but profound judgment in art; for if by an exact observance of rules and proportions, the artist does not produce his effect, he fails in the ultimate object of his art, and execrates the rules as the cause of it. You may therefore, sometimes judiciously deviate from rules, and by so doing, effect your point and triumph; the beholder, who is struck, moved and gratified, will praise your work, and not stop to enquire if rules have been scrupulously observed. I would not however, give this advice to young artists, for it would be a fatal doctrine for them that it is a fine thing to disregard the rules of art. I repeat, therefore, that this remark applies only to great masters, for this deviation from rules can only be done with success, by those who possess profound science and vast experience in their art. The Colossal figures on the Monte Cavallo, when seen near, have the eyes too large and some-

Digitized by Google

what distorted; the mouth also is not exactly parallel with the line of the eyes, and yet these points produce at a distance all their fine and powerful effect. The Sybils too of Bonarotti—those noblest productions of painting, seen close, discover frightful masses of shade, and have a different coat of paint on the upper lips; yet seen from the proper points of view are divine works; this constitutes the highest power of art, and is acquired only by immense study and long experience in the production of works of grandeur and magnitude."

XXXV.

Speaking of some sculptors who had grown old in the mere practice of modelling and had executed nothing in marble, he said, "It is quite necessary, if the young artist ever aspire to be a sculptor, that he should early familiarize himself with the use of the chissel; that there is the same difference between the modeller and the sculptor that there is between one who merely sketches and designs, and a painter: the power of executing works in marble is to the one what the skill to produce finished paintings is to the other: if the hand of the painter has not accustomed itself from childhood to this practice, it will always be backward in seconding his wishes to produce that finely blended colouring, well managed chiaro oscuro, and high finish in which excellence consists; let then the young artist divide his time between the pencil and the chissel, this is the practice by which he may obtain immortality."

XXXVI.

On the subject of a young sculptor, who with

Digitized by Google

much aptitude for his art was retarded in his progress by habits of dissipation, Canova said, " I pity those young men who think to reconcile a life of amusement with the pursuit of the arts. Art should be the ruling passion of the sculptor, for that alone should he live, and should bend all his powers to that object: let him not dissipate his thoughts, or exhaust his bodily powers, for physical strength is more necessary to the sculptor than to any other sort of artist. Can any one exhausted with dancing and late hours, the concert, or the debauch, resume at break of day the labours of the studio with the ardour and application, which is necessary to excellence? hence, he becomes negligent of his art, and indifferent about glory, and content with mediocrity."

XXXVII.

In order to check the ardour of those who took delight only in the wildest and most voluptuous exercises of the imagination, he said, " enthusiasm and warmth of fancy are a great source of effect both to the artist and the poet, and excite admiration; but if you abandon yourself wholly to extatic feelings you will produce only works of extravagance and distortion. Our great sculptors in times past had a noble enthusiasm which is unknown at the present day. Mere enthusiasm and warmth of fancy are little better than delirium, unless joined with soundness of judgment, and also with fine powers of execution; united with these, indeed, it triumphs greatly. Our works produce their effects on the beholder by their influence on his imagination, his judgment and his heart; wild and fanciful inventions can, at the most,

Digitized by Google

affect only the imagination which is the most ignoble of the three, and prevails sometimes with mere madmen; the judgment on the contrary, is to be satisfied only by what is just and true, and the heart by the fine expression of natural feelings; the fine execution of which, subdues the senses, and controuls irresistibly the heart."

XXXVIII.

"Every part of a statue," he said, "should have the charm of beauty, but above all the countenance, bestow then all your pains to produce a lovely and agreeable aspect, fine expressive heads are rare; even the ancients were not very fruitful in this respect: the very extensive museum of the Vatican will not, if you go through it, furnish many beautiful heads; pay attention then to this very important part of the human figure." When employed on the composition of a statue he always in the first place set about finishing the head before attending to any other part, saying, "In order to proceed with any kind of effect I must take delight in my work; but how is it possible to feel this when employed on a subject whose expression excites no emotion within me; how sustain an intercourse for three or four months with such a one, every thing would be done against the grain. No, in the first place it is necessary for me to create in my imagination a face which pleases me, or rather with which I can become enamoured; then when this is done I can fondly devote myself to the completion of the rest of the figure, which if the look was unpleasing would be impossible: it is nature to be more inclined to be attentive to the lovely than

Digitized by Google

to the homely; beauty awakens and exhilarates our feelings, homeliness makes us revert to the tame and ordinary condition of mind. If we see two children, one beautiful, the other ordinary, a weeping, our first feelings always dispose us to notice and console the pleasing one. I have, therefore, always found it necessary to imagine as lovely a face as I possibly can, in order that I may proceed with spirit and devotion to the rest of the work; contemplating this beautiful face, or rather what seems such to me, for I do not venture to call it beautiful, absolutely; I say within myself, "this lovely face ought to have every other part beautiful to correspond with it; the attitude must also be beautiful, she must also be clothed and adorned suitably with her beauty; in this manner this first idea guides and inspires me throughout the work, and this is science, which is, I think, founded on the human heart."

XXXIX.

To some persons who were bestowing exaggerated praises on those masters who have sought to produce effect by giving violent action to their figures, he said, "I do not like this style of forced and violent action; and besides that it seems to me inconsistent with that just and composed medium in which beauty in the imitative arts depend, it is, I think, easy to attain, although to the ignorant it appears difficult. I would rather make that appear easy which we know to be difficult. A piece of sculpture is, you know, a mere block of stone, until formed into life and action; let us now set to work on it, and we shall soon see how much more

Digitized by Google

difficult it is to give an air of life to a part in a state of quiescence and gentle action, than to a part thrown into an action obviously expressive of life."

XL.

One day when he was at work finishing the foot of the dancing nymph which he continued to retouch, as if he never could be satisfied with his work, a friend said to him, "How is it that you bestow all this pains on so trifling a part; it now appears excellent and perfect in every respect; do you expect that people who are charmed by its beauty will stop to examine so closely?" "It is only by diligence," he replied, "that we can make our works deserving of praise. I am now at work on the part under the nail. Among the things which have commonly been passed over with negligence in our art are the nails of the human hand and feet, though the ancients bestowed great pains to express them accurately. In the Venus de Medici they have been worked with wonderful care." "What," said his friend, "would a statue suffer by a defect in the nails?" "Certainly; and the saying of the ancients, 'perfect even to the nails,' by which they characterized a finished production, was not without exact and deep significancy. The ear also, although it is often only slightly marked, and not at all given in detail, is a part which conduces much to the beautiful effect of the countenance, and in the best works of sculpture we see them most carefully finished."

XLI.

Some one asking Canova how he could possibly remain so undisturbed as he was, while exposed to

Digitized by Google

the most acrimonious attacks, he replied, " I ought, I think, to be more obliged to those rigid critics than to those who praise me, even although my critics are bitter and unjust. It is an easy thing to be napping in the arts: praise brings on us insensibly this fatal lethargic state, while censure on the other hand keeps the artist always on the watch, and inspires a salutary distrust of himself, which prevents his falling into too great licenses or mannerisms: it excites him to out-do, if possible, his former self, and to produce new works greater and more excellent than his former ones."

XLII.

" There is one noble means of avenging ourselves for unjust criticism; it is by doing still better, and silencing it solely by the increasing excellence of our works. This is the only true way of triumphing; but if instead of this you undertake to dispute, to defend, or to criticize by way of reprisal, you involve yourself in endless troubles and disquietudes, disturb that tranquillity which is so necessary to the successful exercise of your pursuit, and waste in harassing contests that precious time which you should consecrate to your art."

XLIII.

It is recorded of the sculptor, Bandinelli, that he used to like to listen to the remarks which his works excited in the beholders; and that when his group of Hercules and Cacus was first exhibited on the Piazza del gran Duca, he sent a friend to collect the opinions that were uttered on that occasion. Canova adopted a more ingenious way of learning

Digitized by Google

the public opinion of one of his works:*—and was used to say on this point, "listen with attention and complaisance to the remarks of every body on your works. I have sometimes got a useful hint from a laundress. Your true advisers, however, are nature and the antique: if you can divest yourself of vanity and self-delusion, and try works fairly and sincerely by these standards, you will always have advisers on which you can depend."

XLIV.

The moral character and disposition of Canova were, it is well known, equally excellent with his genius in the arts. "Artists," he used to say, "are called virtuosi: how then can they be so shameless as to allow their actions to be at variance with this designation: the arts themselves are in their nature divine, and partake of the celestial beauty whence they emanate: in their scope also they are most excellent, lending their aid in support of religion and of all the virtues. With these sublime objects, I cannot conceive how an artist can disgrace, by a vicious life, this noble calling; besides purity of heart and ingenuousness of mind have a great influence to

* When Canova's great work, the monument of Pope Rezzonico, Clement XIII. in St. Peter's, at Rome, was first opened to the public, the sculptor, wishing to know the real sentiments of the people, joined the crowd of persons who were looking at it in the disguise of a ragged old monk, and listened, undiscovered, to their observations. Prince Rezzonico, who had commissioned the work of Canova, was also present; and taking the disguised artist for some dirty old beggar, and somewhat too bold, put him on one side, and told him to keep at a distance.

Digitized by Google

ennoble the conception of the artist, and even on his style and powers of execution. All artists, more or less, impress themselves on their works; the courtesy and grace, the gentleness and disinterestedness, the noble and ingenuous soul of Raffaello beam out plainly, and with a most delightful effect in all his works. A portrait was one day shewn to Canova, said to be that of Correggio, when the sculptor was employing the impoverished artists of Rome to execute the busts of Italian worthies to be placed in the Pantheon; but as the painting exhibited a coarse and forbidding countenance, he said, "you must be mistaken, the painter of grace and beauty could never have had so repulsive an aspect." This judgment was afterwards found to be correct, for it turned out that the portrait was not a genuine one; but when the true portrait of Correggio all spirit and grace was shewn to him, he exclaimed, "Here, indeed, is he who could produce those lovely and expressive forms!"

XLV.

One of the young artists employed in the studio of Canova used to express scruples of delicacy at the naked representation of the human form, and seemed much scandalized when set to work on such subjects; the sculptor, noticing this groundless and ridiculous notion, said to him, "I myself detest, as an abomination, all immodest subjects, and think that an artist should never sully his mind by treating such: besides that impurity can never be really beautiful; but still if the human form be the language of his art, it is by the imitation of it alone that he can

Digitized by Google

express himself, giving, however, to nudity itself an air of perfect modesty. If, however, you are unable to do this, if your mind is so abject that the bad thoughts of your corrupt nature are excited by so noble and innocent a study as that of the fine arts, quit them by all means for some other pursuit. The human form is a divine object, and bears, clearly marked, the impress of its great Creator. If God had not chosen to form it in every part as it is, he would have fashioned it differently, for he is omnipotent. Should we then scruple to represent that which he has formed, always, however, with that propriety, and that veil of delicacy, which although not needed in a state of innocence, the depraved state of our feelings in this respect has rendered necessary. An unchaste effect is not produced by mere nudity, but by the attitude, and by the obviously vicious intention of the artist; for to me it seems that the human form, when faultless and exquisitely beautiful, tends only to sooth and purify the heart, and to awaken in the mind a delightful sympathy with the state of its pristine innocency. Besides, perfect beauty has a something spiritual and celestial in it, and elevates the mind to the contemplation of that heavenly and invisible beauty of which it is the most perfect symbol. Can any one have a heart so depraved as not to feel chaste and refined emotions when gazing on the exquisite form of a Grecian statue, or abashed at his own want of elevation? perfect beauty, therefore, is called ideal, because it is an object of mind alone, and not of the senses. A vitiated mind alone can form impure thoughts at the sight of a naked image

Digitized by Google

of perfect beauty and in a decorous posture; nor can I believe that the ancients, who deified virtue, did so far prostrate their minds as to derive any low gratification from the worship they paid to those models of naked beauty."

XLVI.

"The two qualities," he said, "which pre-eminently raise the merit of works of art, are nobleness and grace, the former bestows on it a character of something divine, without which no work can produce much effect. But grace is necessary to make it universally pleasing, no heart being so insensible as not to feel the influence of grace, especially when united with dignity."

XLVII.

On the subject of an artist, who with a devoted industry had made little progress, and after many years of labour and reiterated attempts had produced nothing at all corresponding in effect, he remarked, "perseverance must, at last, obtain something; but before applying ourselves to a pursuit like the arts, we should ascertain that nature has given us an aptitude for them—perseverance alone is not enough. When a young artist, who has mastered the rudiments of his art, does not advance rapidly and decidedly in the first three or four years, there is, in general, little to be expected of him: with practice, indeed, he may obtain more freedom, more practical skill and knowlege, but he will not gain on the score of originality or inventive genius. The figure of Meekness, on the tomb of Ganganelli, is one of my earliest productions; and yet now, after thirty

Digitized by Google

years of practice, I do not know that I have learnt to do better. I am mortified to find my powers so limited, and would fain raise myself to a higher pitch, but I cannot."

XLVIII.

So moderate and guarded was he in his opinion of his own merit, that when highly praised, he often said, " But is it certain that I deserve these praises? I decline taking them to myself, lest I should usurp that to which I have not a just claim; neither can I so fully depend on my judgment as to think that I can produce true excellence, but constantly expect to see some boy start up and outdo me."

XLIX.

Reverting to the subject of the importance in works of art, of a clear and forcible expression of the thoughts and emotions of the mind, he observed, " The famous old masters were wonderfully great in respect to the expression of the affections. We have since then perhaps improved on them in those points that address the judgment, but it has been at the expence of the affections, and this perhaps is the cause of the present cold indifference towards the arts. The proper scope of art is the senses, and the consequence of the great pretensions which are now made of addressing the reason, is that the senses are unaffected, and the heart remains cold and unmoved, and is not kindled into any warmth before even our most admired modern productions."

L.

He always taught that the human form itself was the only means by which the sculptor could display

Digitized by Google

the real nature and powers of his art. He further added on this point, "A work of art to be beautiful, must be adorned with harmony. The artist, in representing the human form, should select for its embellishment the most becoming modulation from all the possible varieties which the justness of outline will admit of, as the musician modulates his subject, ascending and descending, but without ever departing from the limit which harmony requires." He also mentioned another rule which he had derived from his close observation of nature, viz. in proceeding to represent every part, to be guided by a certain ternary relation that may be perceived in it, that is to say, that every object, however minute, is composed of three parts; a greater and two gradually subordinate parts, which, however varied, combine by an insensible union into one harmonious whole. "This discovery," he said, "had guided him in giving the appearances of truth and reality to the flesh, and to every part. He applied the same rule to the arrangement of the hair, to the folds of drapery, &c. proceeding always in the execution of his work by a kind of fine geometrical process.

LI.

Canova had studied with great attention Metastasio's commentary on Aristotle's Poetica, and declared that he had learnt more by it than by all the writers on the arts. In that work it is said that "the language of poetry should be pure, noble, perspicuous, elegant, and sublime; for as the statuary does not use common stone, but the most choice and perfect marble, to display the beauty of form,

Digitized by Google

so the poet should employ the most choice, elevated, and captivating diction, unless he be content to produce only a base and servile imitation." To this passage Canova himself further added, that the sculptor should never debase his subject by the manner of treating it, but support its dignity even by the sacrifice, when necessary, in some degree, of the strictness of truth. He considered, therefore, those painters as the lowest of their profession, who, aiming at being close imitators of nature, introduced the style of the tavern in the treatment of the grand subjects of history; sacrificing thereby the dignity of their art and its most divine attribute—ideal excellence. This remark he also applied to statuary, adding, "avoid every common and ignoble form; even satyrs, sileni, the caducity of old age, and the form of slaves admit of being raised to a degree of appropriate nobleness and beauty."

LII.

He considered the passage in which Aristotle speaks of the three styles of imitation, viz.:—that which represents beings above the condition of mere humanity or those below it, or lastly those that accord with the proper condition of it, as entirely applicable to his art; the scope of this passage he maintained to be, that the imitator, poet, or artist, either exalts the object of his imitation, or debases it, or represents it merely as it is in nature; "but art," he added, "being the minister of virtue, of beauty, and ideal excellence, should alway ennoble its subjects, and if those works in which nature is copied merely as it is, are hardly to be indured, how truly despicable

Digitized by Google

are those which represent it more ignoble than it really is; artists in this style are the disgrace of their profession.

LIII.

To the observation of Aristotle, that much of the pleasure derived from works of imitation consists in the spectator's consciousness of discernment in perceiving the truth or falseness of the imitation, he added this corollary, that they know little of the means of producing effect in the arts who give their subject in all its detail, and leave nothing to the imagination of the beholder. This he thought particularly applicable to those sculptors who are anxious to give an elaborate display of the anatomy of their figures, and that the spectator is not pleased to see a detailed representation which leaves nothing to imagine or to supply.

LIV.

Another observation of that philosopher, that all men are strongly inclined to imitation, was commended by Canova as a truth founded in human nature and experience. "We have never heard," he said, "of a people wholly without imitative arts; however imperfectly practised, yet they do possess them in some degree: hence the artist has the great advantage in his pursuit, of addressing himself to one of the innate propensities of our nature, the gratification of which is the certain means of pleasing; the mathematician and the scientific man, on the other hand, devote their labours to subjects on which the greater part of mankind are careless and indifferent."

Digitized by Google

LV.

Another axiom which he applied to history painting and to bas-reliefs was, that every object must, to be beautiful, have just dimensions; not so minute as to be indistinct in its parts, nor of such magnitude that the eye cannot readily take in all its proportions, for the dimensions of every object should be regulated by the natural powers of the eye of the spectator.

LVI.

In the abovementioned commentary, it is said that the poet is not bound by the duties of the historian; on the contrary, that their respective purposes are wholly different: the business of the historian is not imitative, but merely to narrate with fidelity events as they happened, while the poet is limited in his representation of them only by general truth and probability. "The distinction," he said, "serves to point out clearly, by analogy, the nature and application of ideal beauty in the art; for in the arts of design to represent objects not merely as they are but as they ought to be, to improve them and impart to them all the nobleness, grace, and excellencies of which they are susceptible, consists in collecting and bestowing on a subject all the particular beauties which are consistent with, and appropriate to it;—a type or model, regulated by nature, is first formed in the mind of the artist, and then developed in the execution of his particular art. If therefore," he further added, "the creation of a perfect model is the first and great object of the imitator, how unworthy are they to be called true artists, who slight-

Digitized by Google

ing the lofty purposes of art, are content to take low and imperfect models for imitation: how noble also is the calling of the artist, and how superior to all other arts, however difficult; for these have fixed rules to go by, and do not depend on selection and combination, which not only requires judgment as every thing else does, but also taste, genius, knowledge, and the faculty which may almost be called creative."

LVII.

As the triumph of the orator, according to Cicero, is to move and affect his audience, so the triumph of the artist is the effective use of the passions in his work; on which point he added that the inventor, in composing his group, should imagine himself in the situation of the persons he represents, and actuated by the same passions; accompanying his feelings with the very gestures which they excite, thinking it most true, that they who would affect others must first enkindle their own feelings on the subject. This, in fact, was the case with himself; for often when employed in modelling some interesting work, he became wholly absorbed in the passions of his subject: his features became changeful; he would weep, or exult with joyousness, and his whole frame would become strongly agitated.

LVIII.

Considering execution in the arts as strictly analogous to style and diction in the poetry, he observed that the following precept in the latter is perfectly applicable to the executive part of art; that is, that the language of the poet should be elegant and free

Digitized by Google

from common expressions; that plain and familiar words, however proper and perspicuous, are inadequate to the purposes of poetry, to sustain the nobleness of which a choiceness and felicity of diction is necessary, and a careful avoidance of the trite and ordinary tone of conversation: for the same end, the artist, he said, ought to admit only the finest countenances and most perfect forms, elegantly folded drapery, graceful and noble actions, objects, in short, at once rare, true, and beautiful.

LIX.

As no one can safely rely on his judgment when exercised on his own productions, he highly blamed those artists who work in secret, and by their reserve and sullenness, lose the advantage of the judgment of others. He held that artists should endeavour to satisfy the multitude, for that those who would establish a durable reputation, must please not only connoisseurs, but the mass of the people. Their works must possess the various merits which can at once instruct and delight the man of cultivated taste and the ignorant; as the immortal poem of Tasso, which is both the delight of literati and of boatmen. He therefore thought it very useful to let his designs be seen by the public in their unfinished state; for although ignorant of the principles of art, they are very capable of feeling the effects of grace, beauty, verity, and passion. The opinion of Metastasio on this point he thought very just and important. The judgment of the multitude will, if rightly considered, be found to deserve more weight than is usually allowed to it. The public are, upon the whole, the

Digitized by Google

east corrupted of judges; their judgment is not affected or biassed by rivalry, prejudices of different schools, or false misapprehended, or misapplied, precepts. They do not attempt to display erudition, or indulge in malignity to the moderns under the mask of admiration of the ancients, or any other of those rancorous feelings which are fomented, or rather produced by that learning which is unaccompanied with wisdom. Canova further cited the instance of Phidias, of whom it is told by Lucian, that on the occasion of his celebrated statue of Jupiter being first exposed to the view of the people, he concealed himself in order to ascertain their opinions on it. Some praised it—others found defects in it; the nose they said was too large, the face too long, and pointed out other faults. When they had departed, Phidias reconsidered his work, and made many alterations agreeably to the public opinion, for he held it more safe to be guided by the sentiments of the many, than by the judgment of one, however skilled in his art.

LX.

Finally, Canova fully agreed with the following maxim in the abovementioned commentary of Metastasio, that good judgment is of more importance in the arts than mere knowledge, however extensive of theory and precepts, that without this judgment rules and precepts will be of no service to the artist, rather that they will be hurtful to him by obstructing the exercise of the powers of which nature may have given him the command.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Engraved by Henry Moses.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

*
LAPR
MDCCCXXIII
ERMA
NELL ATENEO
TREV
*

ARTIVM
AMATORES
VIRTVTVM
ADMIRATORES
DE OMNIVM
SENTENTIA
CIↃ ICCCXXIII

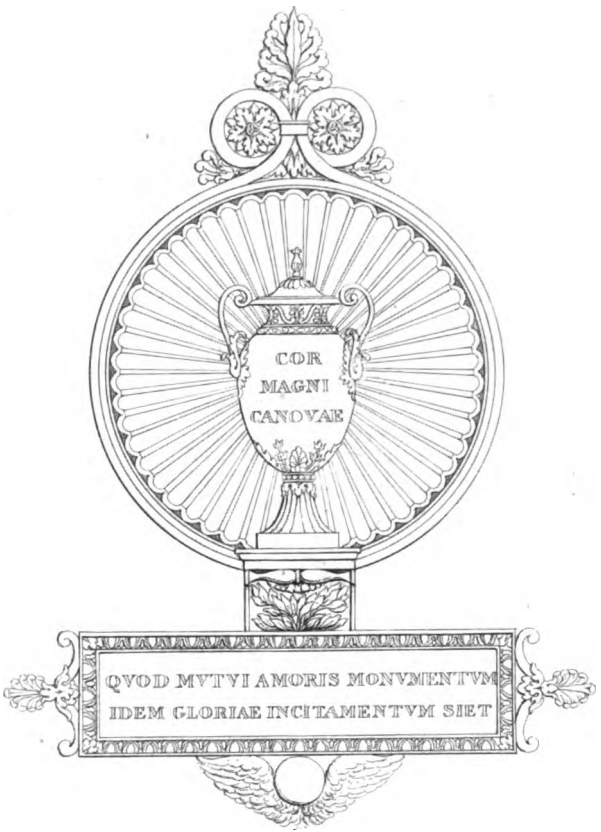
COLLEGIVM
ARTIFICVM
A·DIVO·LVCA
IN FVNERE
D·D
CIↃ ICCCXXIII

Engraved by Henry Moses

London Published by Septimus Prowett Pall Mall

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

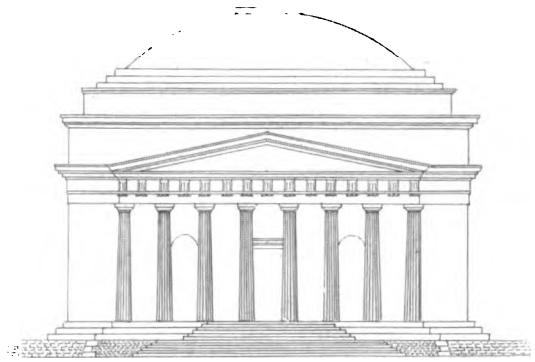


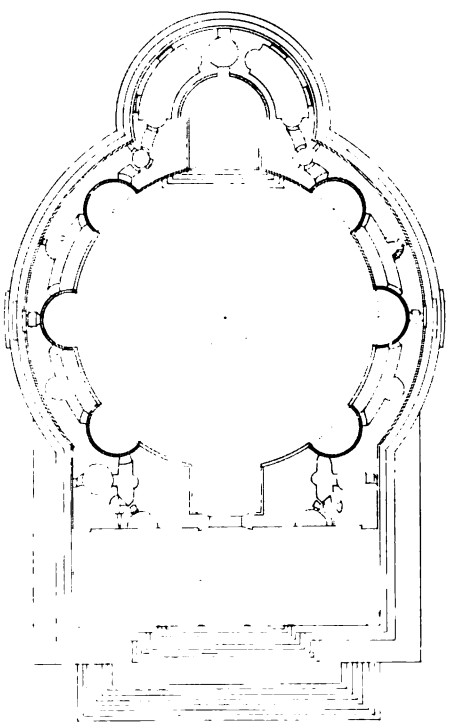
Engraved by Henry Moses.

Published 1836 by Septimus Prowett, Old Bond Street.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google





Engraved by Henry M[illegible]

THE CHURCH AT POSSAGNO.

London Published by [illegible] Paternoster Row [illegible]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MURAT.

London Publd by Septimus Prowett, 28 Old Bond Street.

Digitized by Google

MADAME MURAT.

Digitized by Google

GENERAL MURAT AND MADAME MURAT.

(BUSTS IN MARBLE.)

THESE busts are full of truth and animation, and present respectively the bold traits of manly beauty and the more delicate charms of the other sex. To both Nature was highly liberal in the gift of personal beauty, which the artist has here faithfully preserved; he has also given the full scope which such features allow to the exercise of the highest attribute of art—expression; of which the human countenance is the throne and native seat.

Canova has chosen to represent this brave soldier in a state of calmness, and even with features slightly irradiated with pleasure, rather than in the stern excitement of battle or the exulting hour of victory; agreeably to the precept of Grecian art, which forbade the sacrifice of beauty and dignity to expression. In the execution of this bust there is a felicity which shows that the artist devoted all his powers to infuse into it the full spirit and beauty of his subject; the slender mustachio that shades his lip, is finished so finely as to appear growing naturally

Digitized by Google

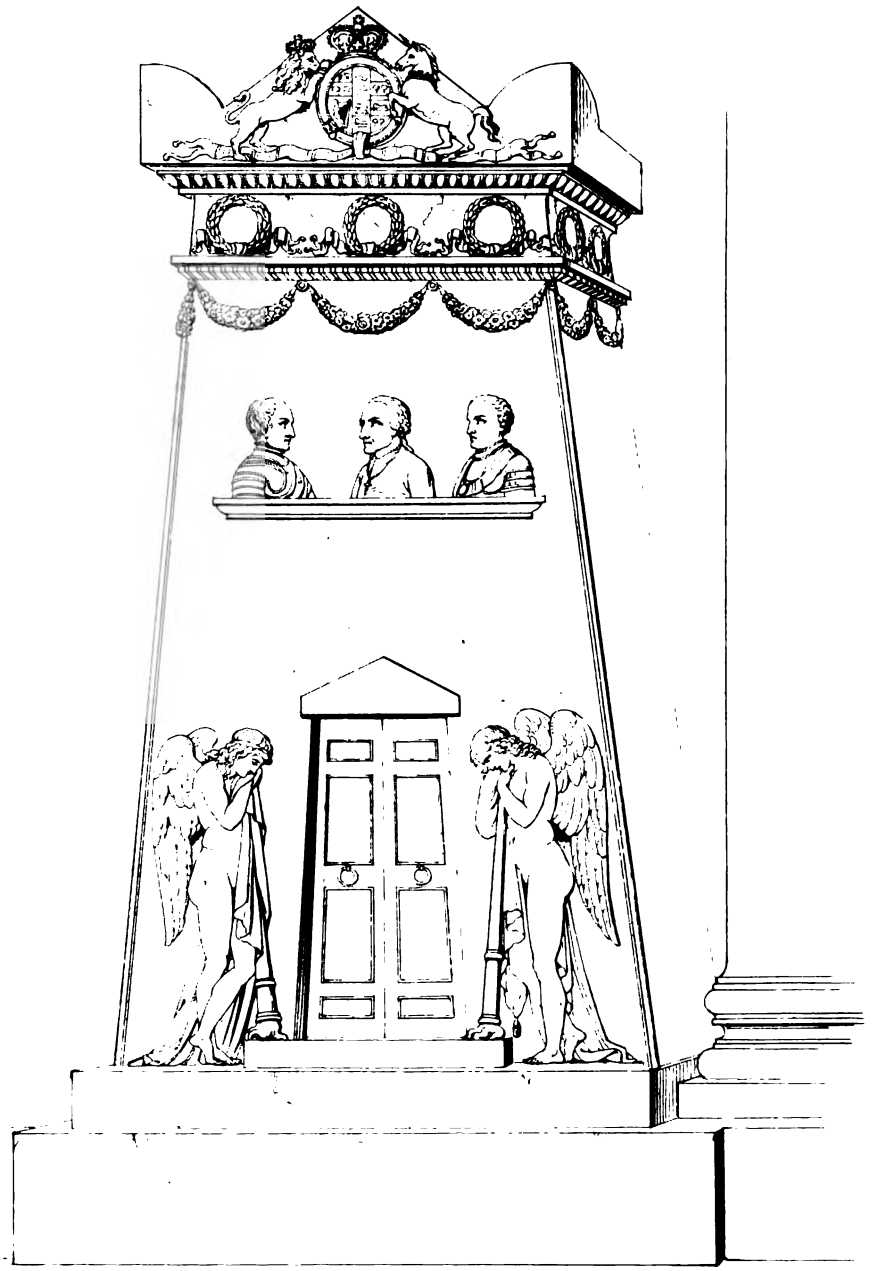
out of his smooth elastic skin, and adds grace rather than terror to his aspect; the hair too, which is profusely spread in thick and clustering ringlets over the head and down the neck, suits admirably with the vigorous and luxuriant character of this bust.

In the countenance of Madame Murat there is an union of dignity with the greatest sweetness; so sprightly is the expression of her features, and so much has she the kindling look of one about to speak, that we incline to listen, and almost expect to hear from her opening lips that unstudied beauty of words with which she was gifted.

If this bust were an unknown head, such are the graceful forms of the neck and chin, the rich and elegantly disposed tresses hanging from behind with a look of careless reality, that we should unhesitatingly assign it to the favoured climate of Greece, and the execution to one of her most gifted sculptors.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Engraved by Henry Moses

MONUMENT OF CARDINAL YORK.

Plate 1.

Published by Septimus Prowett, 23, Tal Pond Street

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt.

Engraved by Henry Moses.

MONUMENT OF CARDINAL YORK

Plate 2.

Published by Septimus Prowett 29 Old Bond Street.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT

OF

CARDINAL YORK.

(IN MARBLE OF CARRARA.)

This monument, although erected on the occasion of the death of Cardinal York, serves equally to preserve the memory of James, better known as the Pretender, and of his two sons, Charles Edward, and the Cardinal above-mentioned, with whom terminated the House of Stuart. The form was in some measure determined by the site previously fixed on for its reception, being an intercolumniation in the church of St. Peter's at Rome, deficient both in respect to the breadth and depth usually required for a grand mausoleum; the difficulties, however, arising from these restrictions have not only not defeated the object intended, but have proved the occasion of the production of a work, which, viewed in respect to the harmony and simplicity of its design, and the beauty and purity of its execution, is worthy of the best era of antiquity. It is pyramidal, and rises on a basement formed by a continua-

Digitized by Google

tion of the bases of the columns themselves, to the height of fifty-eight Roman palms, with a breadth of fifteen. On each side of the entrance to the tomb, in mezzo rilievo, is a winged genius leaning on his expiring torch; their actions and features finely expressive of the sympathy which beings of their celestial nature may be supposed to feel for the sorrows of mortals; their angelic forms are described with a grace and purity of outline, and a softness and elasticity of appearance in the fleshy parts, that may be compared with Canova's most celebrated productions in this class. Immediately over the door is inscribed

BEATI MORTUI
QUI IN DOMINO MORIUNTUR.

Above this, and at two-thirds of the height of the monument, are seen the half-length portraits, also in mezzo rilievo, of the father and the two sons, so animated and expressive, that they seem engaged among themselves in earnest conversation. Beneath is the following inscription:—

JACOBO III.
JACOBI II. MAGNÆ. BRIT. REGIS FILIO
CAROLO EDVARDO
ET HENRICO. DECANO. PATRUM. CARDINALIUM
JACOBI III. FILIIS
REGIÆ STIRPIS STUARDIÆ POSTREMIS
ANNO M.DCCC.XIX.

Digitized by Google

The upper part is adorned with festoons, and the frieze with olive crowns; above which, in the middle of the frontispiece, are the armorial bearings of England. Such are the parts and dimensions of this tomb, in which the artist has boldly deviated from the false and extravagant style of modern sepulchral monuments, to return to those forms so simple and appropriate to the solemnity of the subject, which the just taste of the ancients ever observed in works of this nature.

In executing this grand and affecting pile, Canova was led by his generous and disinterested feelings to exceed the stipulated charges of his work, and has succeeded in producing a tomb highly worthy of its place in the first of Christian churches, and of the illustrious but ill-fated persons whose memory it is destined to perpetuate.*

* This work was chiefly promoted during the visit of Canova to England in 1814, and is an object of peculiar interest to the English who visit Rome.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHARLES III – KING OF NAPLES.

Digitized by Google

CHARLES III.

KING OF NAPLES.

(EQUESTRIAN STATUE IN BRONZE)

THIS equestrian statue represents, in colossal dimensions, the illustrious prince, the first of the House of Bourbon who sat on the throne of Naples. Under his sway that kingdom increased in power and riches; literature and the arts were encouraged, and with a magnificence kindred to that of Louis XIV. the town of Caserta was raised to the beauty and splendour of a Versailles. It was also during his reign that the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, buried for seventeen centuries, were brought to light, and gave so powerful an impulse to the study of antiquities, and to the arts.

Charles is represented in heroic costume, and, as is supposed, in the act of pointing to the splendid edifices with which he had adorned the city of Naples; the attitude is graceful and commanding, and the countenance presents a striking resemblance of this monarch. The figure of the horse is peculiarly

Digitized by Google

admirable, and may be compared with advantage with any existing model of that noble animal. The vibration and agility of his movement, the lightness and majesty of his figure, the union of the natural with the ideal forms of antiquity, all conspire to place this work among those which do most honour to Italian art. We must not, however, look here for the forms of the Thessalian horse, and of those which the marbles of the Parthenon have familiarized with our eyes; the just scope of an artist being ever to produce a model of the choicest forms of the race of his own era and country.

This grand monument must excite the admiration of all cultivated minds, who, reflecting on the merits of this magnificent prince, and his devotion to the interests and improvement of his country, will be disposed to exclaim in the words of Virgil:

"Semper honos nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt.

Engraved by [illegible]

PIUS VII.

Published by Sir James Prowett 23 Old Bond Str.

Digitized by Google

PIUS VII.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

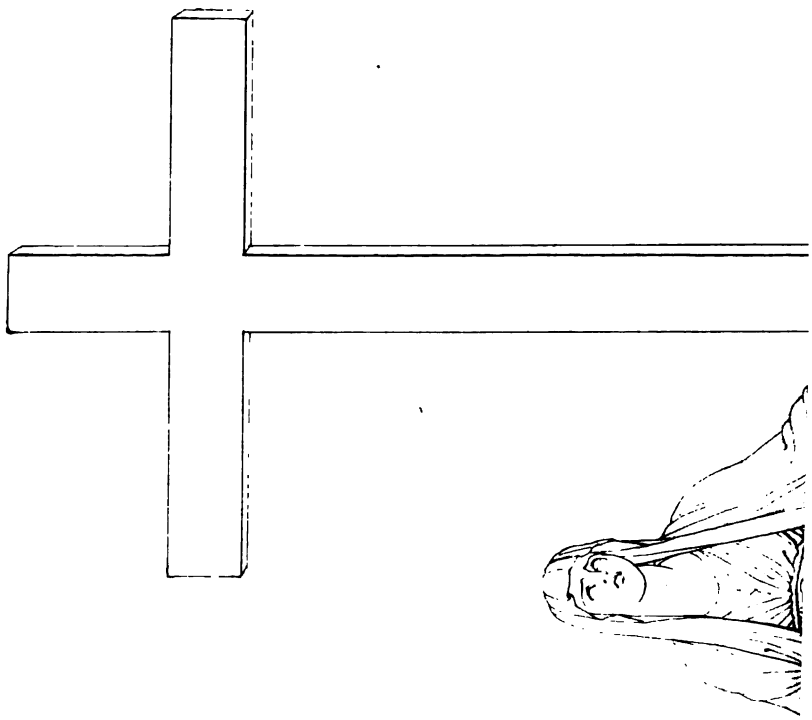
THIS bust was executed by the sculptor in 1807, and presented by himself to his Holiness. It is larger than nature, and presents us not only with a vivid and accurate resemblance of the features, but also with that which is the higher and more difficult part of this branch of imitative art, the moral and intellectual character of its original; here we can trace his known benevolence and meekness, his gentle and obliging manners, while, in the stedfast eye and ample reflecting brow, we find the prudence, firmness, and enlarged mind, for which he was equally distinguished. His dress and the emblems attached to it are those of the order of St. Benedict, to which he belonged, excepting the Moors' heads, which are proper to the noble family of Chiara Monti di Cesena; a simple cap covers his head, from beneath which, the hair which is very elaborately treated, descends somewhat down the neck behind. The former part of the pontificate of Pius VII. involves a series of trials and difficulties arising from the political evils of Italy, which the consciousness of

Digitized by Google

suffering in the cause of religion could alone have enabled him to support; these are however too recent and public to require detailed notice at present, and are now, too, happily passed away—may he live long to enjoy this happy change; to promote the cause of religion, and the interests of society, and of the arts, of which he is so judicious and munificent a patron.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

PIETA.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE PIETÀ*.

(MODEL IN CLAY.)

When Canova was at Venice, in the Autumn of 1821, and all persons there were exulting at the presence of their illustrious countryman, he suddenly became more than usually solicitous of returning to Rome, a spot which he always deemed peculiarly favorable to the exercise of his genius. This impatience was caused by his fancy having suggested to him the design of this noble and pathetic group, and his ardent wish to develope fully his ideas in modelling it, under the beneficial influence of that nurse of the arts. Arrived in that city, the rapidity of the composition corresponded with these excited feelings, proceeding, as if by a single effort of genius, without either pause or alteration to its completion; thus, before his friends supposed him well recovered from the fatigues of travel, he astonished them, and all Rome, by the exhibition of this work, which, both from the profound principles of art which it involves, and the perfection of its details, could only be thought the result of long study and repeated efforts.

Digitized by Google

This group consists of three figures of the natural size, and in full relief; in the centre is the dead body of Christ, supported on one side by the Virgin Mary, while the Magdalen is in a prostrate attitude on the other; the Virgin is seated on a slight elevation at the foot of the cross, from which the body, which yet retains the flexible form of life, has just been lowered. In respect to the composition of this work, it is allowed by the best judges, that it possesses every thing required for the beauty and perfection of grouping; in the particular figures they remark the finely varied expression in the grief of the two mourners. That of the Virgin Mother is a still and concentrated feeling, unrelieved by tears, addressed wholly to the Eternal Father, to whom, with deep but pious feelings, she seems to offer up the sacrifice of her maternal sorrows. That of the Magdalen, appropriately to her different character and condition, has more of earthly thoughts and feelings in it; it is all abandonment and emotion, restrained only by the divine nature of its object, and gives to her elegant and graceful form a heightened and more expressive cast. Useless must be the attempt to describe the figure of Christ, which can only be adequately conceived by being seen; it possesses a comeliness hardly found among the children of men; the countenance marks the limits to which art can reach in the expression of divinity; it is a beauty,

Digitized by Google

mingled with a sweetness and sanctity, that inspires at once the highest degree of love and veneration.

The beholder of this deeply interesting group experiences a degree of fascination in regarding it, and it is not without a painful effort that he can withdraw from it his admiring eyes.

* This group was intended to be worked, in marble, for the high altar in the church at Possagno, but being left, at the death of Canova, in the clay model, his brother, the Abbé Canova, intends to have it cast in bronze, as a secure means of preserving all its original beauty :—the subject of the Holy Virgin, weeping over the dead body of Christ, is called in Italy " la Pietà," literally the sorrow, or affliction (of the Virgin).

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

DEATH OF

Digitized by Google

OF ADONIS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE DEATH OF ADONIS.

(BASSO RILIEVO, IN PLASTER.)

THIS bas relief represents Adonis stretched lifeless on a couch, placed near to a leafy bower, to which some sheltering drapery is affixed, in an attitude which might be mistaken for that of some deity reposing, if the grief of those around him, and the distracted aspect of Venus, who descends from the sky, did not inform us that the beautiful son of Cinyras is no more. Three nymphs, such as the fine imaginations of the poets have described them, support his drooping head; the naked Graces, fondly and sorrowfully grouped together, look fixedly on him; infantine cupids, such as may be almost called the children of Albano and of Canova, surround the couch in various actions of grief, or accompany the goddess of beauty in her approach. The figure of Venus, as she descends from the skies, her hair flying loosely abroad, her dress neglected and buoyant from the rapidity of her course, strongly expresses the suddenness and vehemence of her grief; her beautiful form is thrown into the most violent attitudes; her bosom seems to palpitate wildly with

Digitized by Google

emotion. Cupid and Hymen stand weeping together apart, the useless torch of the latter turned down towards the earth; even the faithful dogs seem sensible of the melancholy event, and appear to weep over their unfortunate master.

The fine invention, the composition, the tender and animated effect of this bas-relief, powerfully excite the sympathy and admiration of the beholder.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MADAME RECAMIER.

Digitized by Google

MADAME RECAMIER.

(A BUST MODELLED.)

In this bust the sculptor has preserved an animated portrait of the celebrated Madame Recamier, one of the most lovely and fascinating women of our age. These charms have not yet suffered the usual effects of time, as if Nature viewing her work with complacency had suspended in her favour the severity of her laws. Among the proofs of her charms may be mentioned the enthusiastic admiration always excited by her presence in public: even in England, so rich itself in beauty, and usually so parsimonious in praise to foreigners, her presence never failed to attract admiring crowds about her. Madame Recamier was rarely seen without a light veil thrown over her head, which the sculptor has not forgotten in this bust; here too he has preserved the fine expression of her countenance for an idea of which much more must be hoped from the accompanying outline than from my slight description. With Madame de Staël she was connected with the noble ties of friendship, which is alone an eulogium on her character and qualities.

Digitized by Google

The celebrated daughter of Necker speaks thus of her friend, " cette belle personne qui a reçu les hommages de l'Europe entiere et qui n'a jamais delaissê un ami malheureux."

Happy woman, who, beside the envied gifts of nature, possessed a friend so enlightened and art immortalized by such a sculptor!

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF D. MANZONI.

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT

OF

DOMENICO MANZONI.

(BASSO RILIEVO, IN MARBLE.)

Among the various causes that have promoted the works of our great Sculptor, the most frequent has been the fond wish of preserving the memory of dear and departed friends.

To this end the noble family of the Manzoni have caused this Monument to be erected to the memory of Domenico Manzoni, whose valued life (as we read in the inscription beneath) was terminated by the hand of an assassin.

It consists of a marble tablet, with an elegant cornice, on which, in low relief, is a female figure, seated beside a funeral urn, placed on a polished pedestal. Her attitude expresses grief profound, and unmixed with hope, as if lamenting a beloved object on whom the tomb has closed for ever. She is simply and gracefully attired in a fine tunic, over which is wound a flowing mantle. Her hair neglected, as in grief, is simply gathered together behind, while a few

Digitized by Google

locks hang loosely down toward the back. The following is the inscription on the tomb, penned by the celebrated Schiassi:—

GERTRUDA. VERSARIA. FILIIQUE
MARITO. ET. PATRI. INCOMPARABILI.
VIRO. INGENII. ACERRIMI, BENEFICIENTIÆ. SINGULARIS.
CUM. LACR. F. C.
UT. QUI PRODITORIS SCELERE EXTINCTUS EST
CANOVÆ ARTE IN ÆVUM SPIRET.
VIXIT ÆT XXXX.
DECESS. V. K. IVN. A. M.DCCC.XVII.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MODEL OF A MONUMENT FOR ALFIERI.

Digitized by Google

MODEL OF A MONUMENT

FOR

VICTOR ALFIERI.

CANOVA having undertaken, at the desire of the Countess of Albany, to produce a monument for our great tragic poet, Victor Alfieri, designed and modelled in the first instance the bas-relief which is presented in this plate; excited, however, by admiration of his subject, and reflecting also on the vastness of the Temple in which it was to be placed, the church of Santa Croce at Florence, he felt the inadequacy of a composition in this style to the greatness of the object, and to the place destined for its reception: spontaneously, therefore, altering his design, he constructed the grand monument which has been given in the former part of this work; the intrinsic merit and interest, however, of this design, connected with two such great names, have caused it to be preserved here among the works of our great sculptor. On a pedestal, rising from a marble tablet, is placed the bust of the poet, a garland of flowers hanging over his shoulders. On the left stands Italy, leaning against the pedestal, and weeping for a son, whose lofty and energetic strains

Digitized by Google

have awakened the love of virtue and patriotism in the breasts of his countrymen, and called forth a race of men animated only by the desire of greatness. On the other side of the pedestal is the tragic genius who points to the bust of the illustrious dead, and seems to console Italy by reminding her of the honour which Alfieri has conferred on his country: at his feet is the tragic mask, and his right hand holds an extinguished torch; a little winged boy, in an attitude of grief, holds the scepter which Italy in her sorrow has abandoned.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt. Engraved by Henry M[illegible]

CARDINAL FESCH.

London, Pub.d by Septimus Prowett, 62 Paternoster Row 1827

Digitized by Google

CARDINAL FESCH.

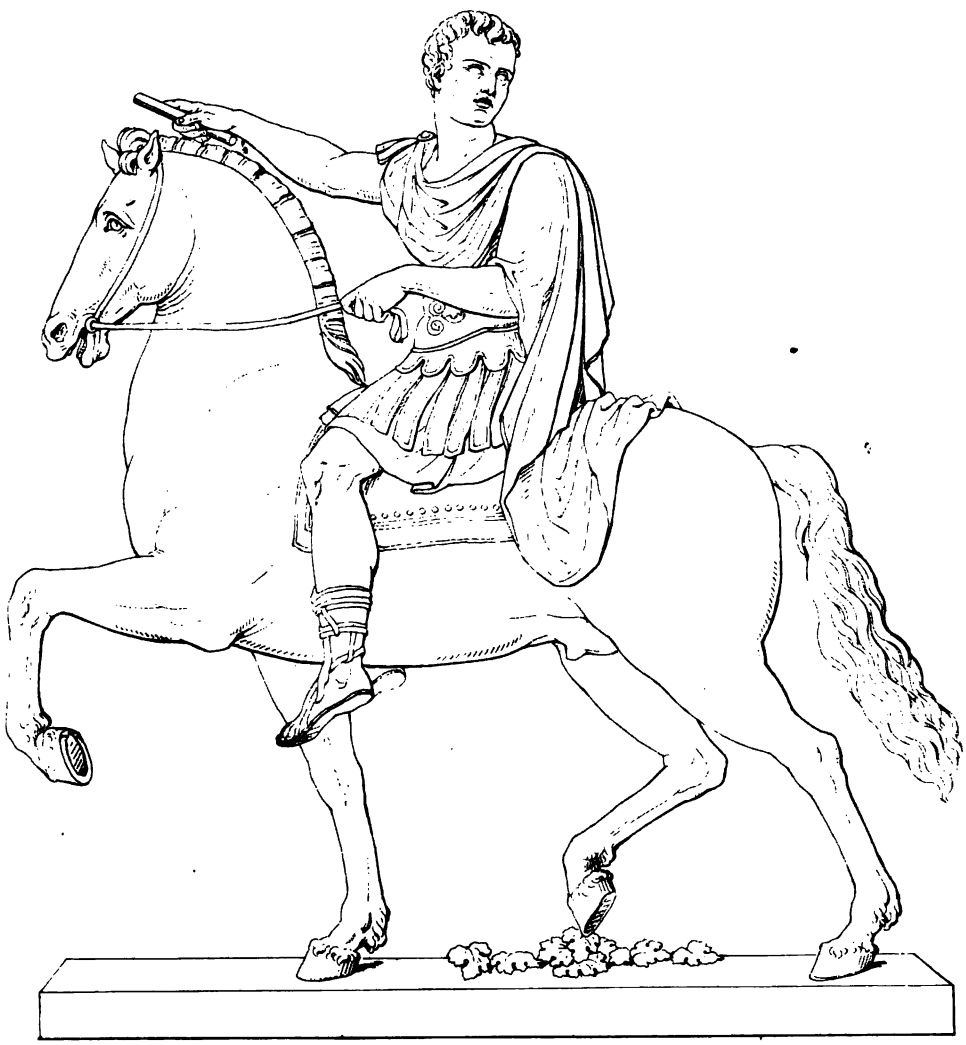
(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

THIS is one of those eloquent countenances that present a compendium of the character and qualities of their originals;—here the sculptor has preserved with great fidelity and effect the likeness of his subjects, with all his firmness of mind, and dignified but not severe gravity of expression. The sacred vestments and the double cross bespeak the dignity of the cardinilate; it is evidently the portrait of one exercised in high and important affairs: it may be added too of one who maintained an imperturbable spirit in the most terrible vicissitudes of fortune, in the history of which his name will not be passed over in silence.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



NAPOLEON.

EQUESTRIAN STATUE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

This work, such as it is represented in the plate, was modelled rather above the natural size, for Napoleon in 1807, then emperor of the French, and at the height of his fortune: he is leading on his army to battle, and in the act of looking back towards his soldiers, to whom, with a look of confidence, he seems to point out the enemy. The spirit and motion of this attitude was preferred by Canova, as more suitable to the character of the man, to the simplicity and repose usually preserved in monumental statues of this description. The subsequent history of this work is curious, and marks the rapid and extraordinary political changes which occurred shortly after that period. On the defection of Murat from the cause of his old patron, Napoleon was unhorsed, and the sculptor was commissioned to place King Giovacchino in his stead; the work being at the same time raised to colossal dimensions; before however the sculptor had pro-

Digitized by Google

ceeded far in his work, Murat also slipped from his seat, and Charles the Third of Naples finally took possession of this noble animal, as will be seen by a reference to the equestrian statue of that prince.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Engraved by Henry Meyer.

MARIA ELISA BUONAPARTE.

Published by Septimus Prowett 33 Old Bond Street.

Digitized by Google

MARIA ELIZA,

SISTER OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

ARDOR and vivacity are the characteristics of this bust; and so occupy the mind of the beholder that he forgets to examine if nature has been bountiful or niggardly in other respects; the expression of vivacity is rarely produced with good effect in sculpture, owing perhaps to the rigid material which is its medium, or to the conventionals of the art.—This sister of Napoleon seems to have partaken in some degree of the force of character which belonged to that daring and energetic man. The sculptor has expressed this particularly about the eyes, and in the strongly marked and somewhat projecting lips—it is indeed a masculine countenance, indicating those qualities which the men consider as proper and peculiar to themselves, and which are tolerated in the other sex only when mingled with and relieved by their softer charms and more appropriate graces.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APOLLO CROWNING HIMSELF.

Digitized by Google

APOLLO CROWNING HIMSELF.

(MARBLE STATUE.)

THIS statue, which is about half the natural size, was commissioned by Prince Rezzonico, and was the earliest of Canova's works executed at Rome; it is interesting on this account, and also of its own merit, although it appears that it did not satisfy the idea of excellence which the sculptor, even at that early period, had formed. The God, who appears to have just achieved some triumph, is standing beside the trunk of a tree, on which he rests with his left hand, while with his right he places on his head the crown.

" Della sempre frondosa arbor vivace."

He is naked, not having yet resumed his mantle: suitably to the action, and to the purposes of art, his face is turned towards the left shoulder, with a look of animation and self-complacency, and possesses all the attributes of youthful beauty.

" —— leggiadro sempre
E giovane dimostra il bel sembiante
E giammai sopra il tenero suo mento
Di lanugine molle orma non surge."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

IDEAL FEMALE HEAD. N°1

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A. Canova Sculpt

IDEAL FEMALE HEAD. N° 2

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

IDEAL FEMALE HEAD. N°3

Digitized by Google

IDEAL FEMALE HEADS.

(BUSTS IN MARBLE.)

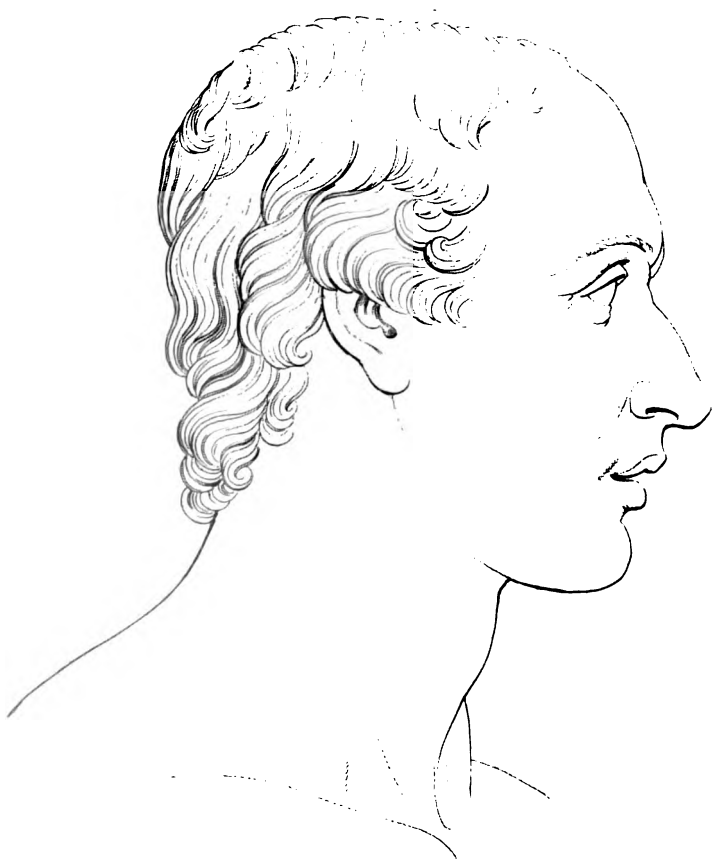
THESE three busts, which are either merely ideal or else intended for Muses, were sculptured by Canova, and presented by him to the Duke of Wellington, Lord Castlereagh, and Sir Wm. Hamilton, respectively, as tokens of his grateful sense of the assistance rendered to him in the recovery of the works of art from the French in 1815; a fourth was also presented on the same occasion to Sir Charles Long.

They are all three very beautiful, and closely resembling each other in style and expression, being distinguishable only by slight peculiarities of features, and in the arrangement of the hair.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



A. [illegible] Sculpt. Engraved by Henry Moses.

GIO. B. CANOVA.

Published by Septimus Prowett 23, Old Bond Street

Digitized by Google

GIO. B. CANOVA.

(A BUST IN MARBLE.)

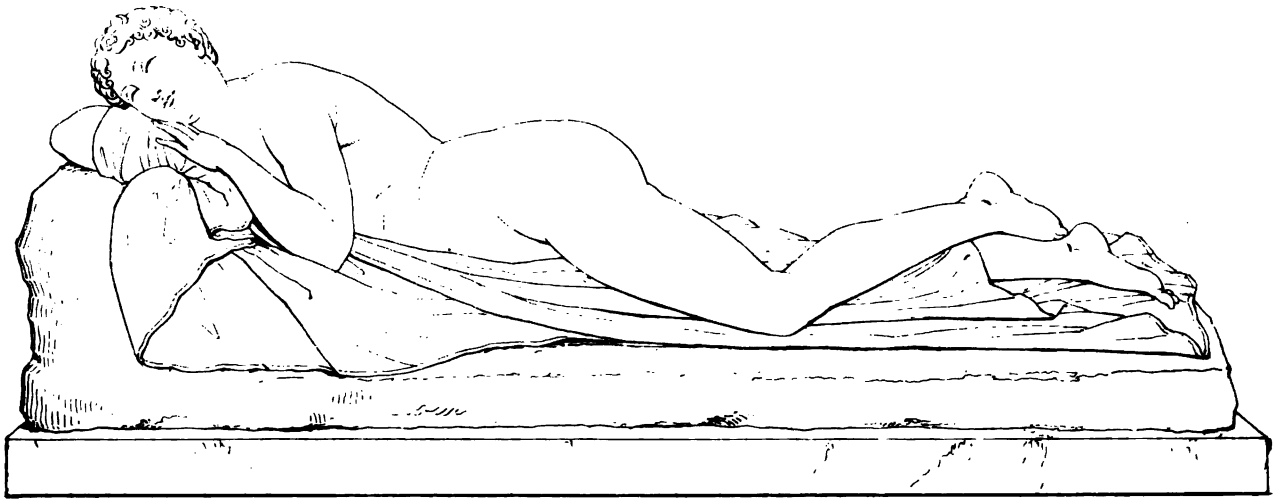
THIS bust did not receive from the sculptor those last finishing touches under which his works seem to assume all the softness and animation of reality. In portraying features however, so dear and so familiár to him, he could not fail to impress on his marble traces of his excited powers, and even in its unfinished state, to leave a close and animated resemblance of the original. Here he has faithfully given that ample forehead, the seat of lofty thought; the eloquent expression of lips, and that honest smile with which the Abbe Canova usually accompanies his words, whether of courtesy or that deep erudition of which he is possessed. Between the brothers the most tender and inseparable friendship existed; while the one was occupied in moulding his clay into the most noble and expressive forms, the other, seated beside him, read passages from the authors of antiquity, to illustrate his subject, or aid his creative imagination. To him also the sculptor confided his most secret thoughts and afflictions, for these even the kind and virtuous Canova did not wholly escape, although they could never permanently disturb his pure

Digitized by Google

and elevated soul; dying, too, it was most consoling to him to have so faithful a friend to complete his noble and generous purposes; these the Abbe fulfilled so scrupulously that the objects of his benevolence were hardly made sensible of the death of their benefactor, nor did the Temple at Possagno proceed to its completion with less unsparing ardour than when Canova himself inspired the work.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Engraved by Henry Moses

A SLEEPING NYMPH.

Digitized by Google

A SLEEPING NYMPH.

(MODEL IN CLAY.)

CANOVA has already, more than once, portrayed these bright ethereal beings, who, in mythology, animate all nature, and are the inhabitants and guardians of the forests, the rivers, and the mountains. In these productions he has succeeded in giving to the form and aspect that difficult expression of the union of mortal and celestial natures which is attributed to them. The one before us seems to be an Oread, or Nymph of the Mountains, reposing in one of those cool delicious grots which the poets so much delight to describe; her couch is a mossy stone, spread with an ample piece of drapery, to which the elaborate chisel of the artist has given almost its peculiar colour and texture; her slumber is deep and peaceful; no idle and fugitive dreams seem to venture near to disturb it. Reclining partly on her side, and partly turned downwards, a chastened expression is given to her figure, while her lovely face, turned upwards, is wholly presented to our gaze. But the accompanying outline will, better than mere description, convey an idea of her delicately

Digitized by Google

moulded figure, the expressive loveliness of her countenance, and the enchanting effect of those soft and flexible forms, with which the chisel of this artist can warm his insensible marble into life.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt. Engraved by Henry Moses.

TUCCIA.

Published by [illegible]

Digitized by Google

TUCCIA.

(A MARBLE BUST.)

" S'eri tu in volto qual ti feo Canova
Vana, O Tuccia, del cribro era la prova."

NEGRI.

THIS ingenious epigram leaves little to remark on this interesting bust. It is the image of Tuccia, a Roman Virgin, devoted to the service of the Goddess Vesta: accused of a deviation from the strict rules of her order she appeals with conscious innocence to the ordeal of the sieve, which consisted in the accused carrying the water of the Tiber in a sieve to the temple of Vesta; her head is wrapped in a veil of the finest texture, as worn by the Vestals, the graceful folds of which give a charm to her lovely countenance, such as the pencil of Raphael alone bestowed on his female heads.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

COMTE CICOGNARA.

Digitized by Google

COUNT CICOGNARA.*

(COLOSSAL BUST IN MARBLE.)

THIS bust is one of the latest works of Canova, and one on which, actuated by friendship, he bestowed the most devoted care. Notwithstanding, therefore, the difficulty of preserving resemblance in features, raised so much above the natural size, and also its not having received the important last touches of the artist it presents a most exact and lively image of this excellent and highly-gifted man. The turn of the neck, so full of grace and animation, and the expressive features so faithfully copied from nature, give it indeed all the effect of life and reality. The masterly treatment of the hair too equals perhaps any effort of the kind of this artist; with so light and feathery an appearance does it lie, in graceful locks on the neck and temples, that it seems scarcely to touch or conceal them.

* Author of the Storia della Scultura.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CIMAROSA.

(A MARBLE BUST.)

THE enchanting art of Music, which has had in all ages so boundless and delightful an influence on the soul, was exercised by Cimarosa, whose nature was equally susceptible of joyous and pathetic emotions, with a success that has conferred on him the most distinguished reputation. Canova, urged by the kindred spirit which unites, as brethren, the highly gifted cultivators of the fine arts, has manifested his feelings towards him by this marble bust, executed in the highest style of excellence, and now preserved in the Museum of the Campidoglio. He is represented with the face turned upwards, and presents features indicative of that warmth and energy of soul with which nature endows those who are born to delight and influence mankind. That upcast look seems invoking, from heaven, some of those sprightly and soul-subduing melodies which abound throughout his works. Cimarosa was born in Naples, and died in Venice while employed in composing the music of the opera of Arte-

Digitized by Google

misia, which however he left unfinished; and thus while embellishing with his plaintive strains the fictitious sorrows of the widow of Mausolus, did his own sudden and immature decease call forth the bitter tears of deep and actual grief.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

METOPES.

THE seven following bas-reliefs are all that Canova had modelled of the fourteen with which he intended to adorn the metopes of his church at Possagno. Their subjects are from sacred history, and are treated with a simplicity, justness, and depth of feeling, which make us despair of seeing the number completed with others of equal merit and effect; these compositions are indeed among the very latest of his efforts, when with powers yet unimpaired, his genius had, by deep and indefatigable study of nature and of art, reached its full maturity.

THE CREATION OF THE SUN, THE EARTH, AND THE MOON.

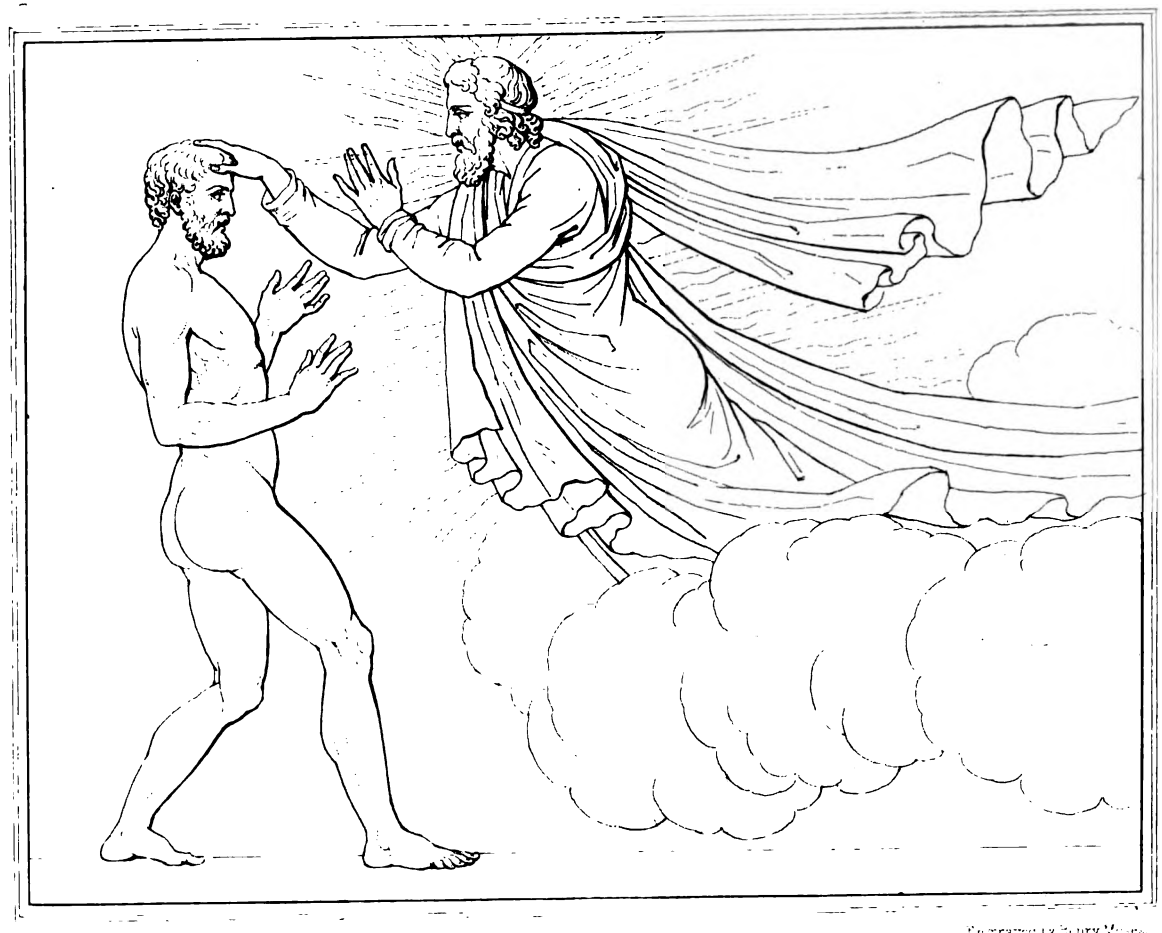
The subject of the first metope is the Deity in the act of creating the Sun and the Moon. He is represented in the human form, clothed in a tunic and long mantle, which is buoyed up into an arch over his head, as if by a sudden descent through the air—partly reclined in an horizontal posture on the clouds, which conceal the lower part of his figure, his aspect is turned

Digitized by Google

to the Sun, towards which his left hand is extended, while the right is placed on the earth: the point of time intended seems to be the uttering of that sublime command, "and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth:" rays of glory and energy issue in all directions from the head of the Creator, and his countenance is wonderfully expressive of majesty, complacency, and that eternal and ever-during vigour of existence which is his attitude. The relative proportions of his figure to those of the heavenly bodies, finely aids the imagination in conceiving his immensity, and prevents the too familiar and literal idea of a merely human form.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



CREATION OF MAN

Digitized by Google

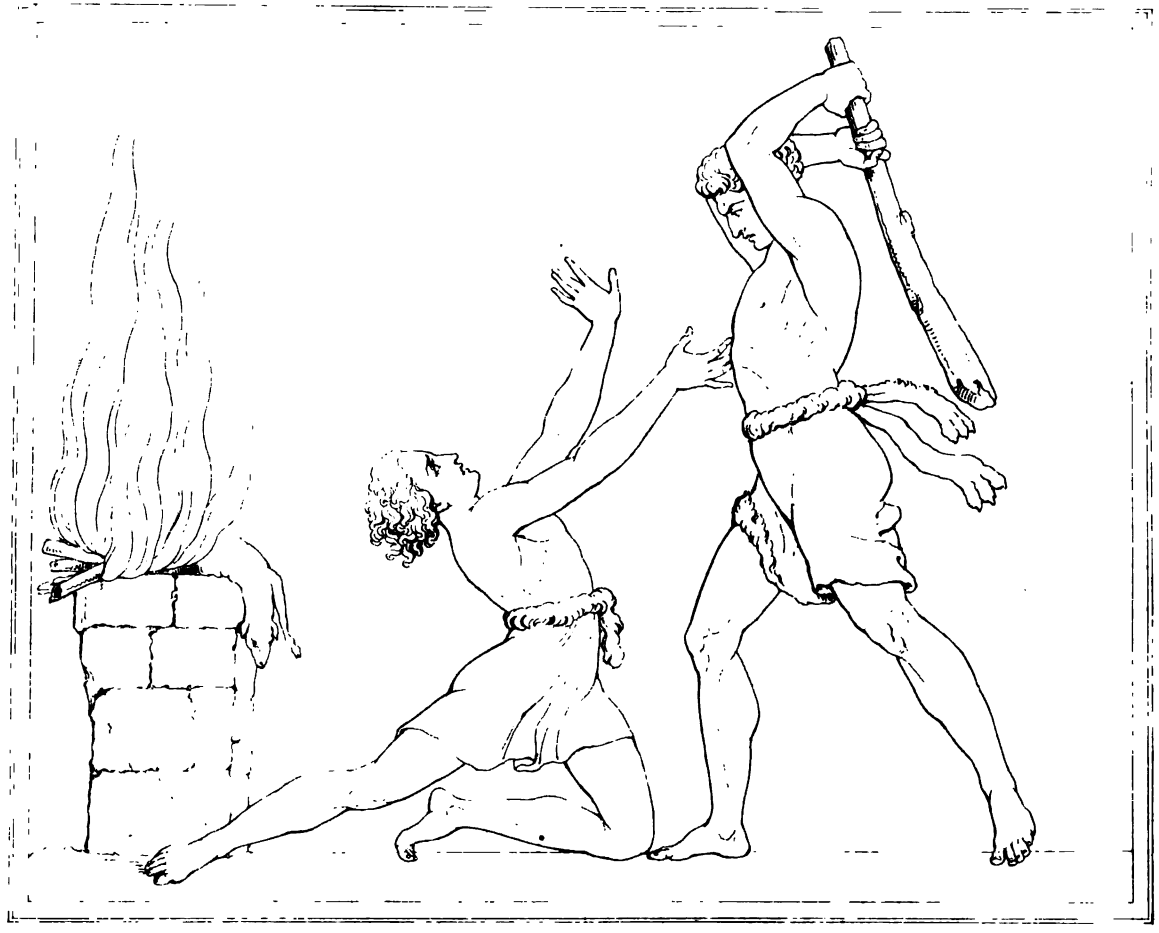
THE CREATION OF MAN.

THE second metope represents God creating man. The Deity is here again figured in the human form, and clothed in ample drapery. Floating, as it were, on the clouds, he places his right hand upon the head of Adam, who stands before him. The Creator seems, at the moment, to be animating his work and calling the soul into existence and activity. The idea is a bold one, but fully supported by the admirable manner in which it is expressed: the look and attitude of Adam is finely expressive of the first awakening of the mind to perception, and of the almost simultaneous feelings of awe and gratitude; his frame is robust and perfectly formed, as befits the idea of a work coming from the hand of a wise and almighty Maker.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Antonio Canova Sculpt

Engraved by Henry Moses.

DEATH OF ABEL.

[illegible] Old Bond Street.

Digitized by Google

THE DEATH OF ABEL.

In representing the murder of Abel, which is the subject of the third metope, Canova has thought proper to depart from the rule of art which forbids the introduction of whatever excites sensations of horror or repugnance in works of design: here the figure and countenance of Cain are shown distorted and dreadful; and even the hair, rigid and knotted into rough masses, marks the most dire and appalling passions. The intention, in deviating from the abovementioned rule, which this artist so generally observes, was doubtless to lead the mind of the observer to see in this first homicide the beginning and prototype of the unnatural crime of human slaughter, which has since so largely stained the earth.

The occasion of this event is marked by the appearance of the altar of Abel, on which a strong and vivid flame from heaven consumes his offering; exultation at this sign of divine approbation, has caused all the latent hatred and jealousy of Cain to burst forth: mad with passion he has seized a deadly club, with which, raised in both hands above his head, he is in

Digitized by Google

the act of crushing his innocent brother. The gentle and virtuous Abel, thrown into a distorted attitude by terror and surprise, raises his arms with a natural effort to avert the dreadful blow, and looks up with a countenance so innocent and piteous, that it would have disarmed any one, except that most savage of animals—a man carried away by his vindictive passion.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM

Published by Septimus Prowett 63 Paternoster Row

Digitized by Google

THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM.

Quell' innocento figlio
Dono del ciel si raro
Quel figlio a te si caro
Quello vuol Dio da te
Vuol che rimanga esangue
Sotto al paterno ciglio
Vuol che ne sparga il sangue
Chi vita già gli diè."

METASTASIO.

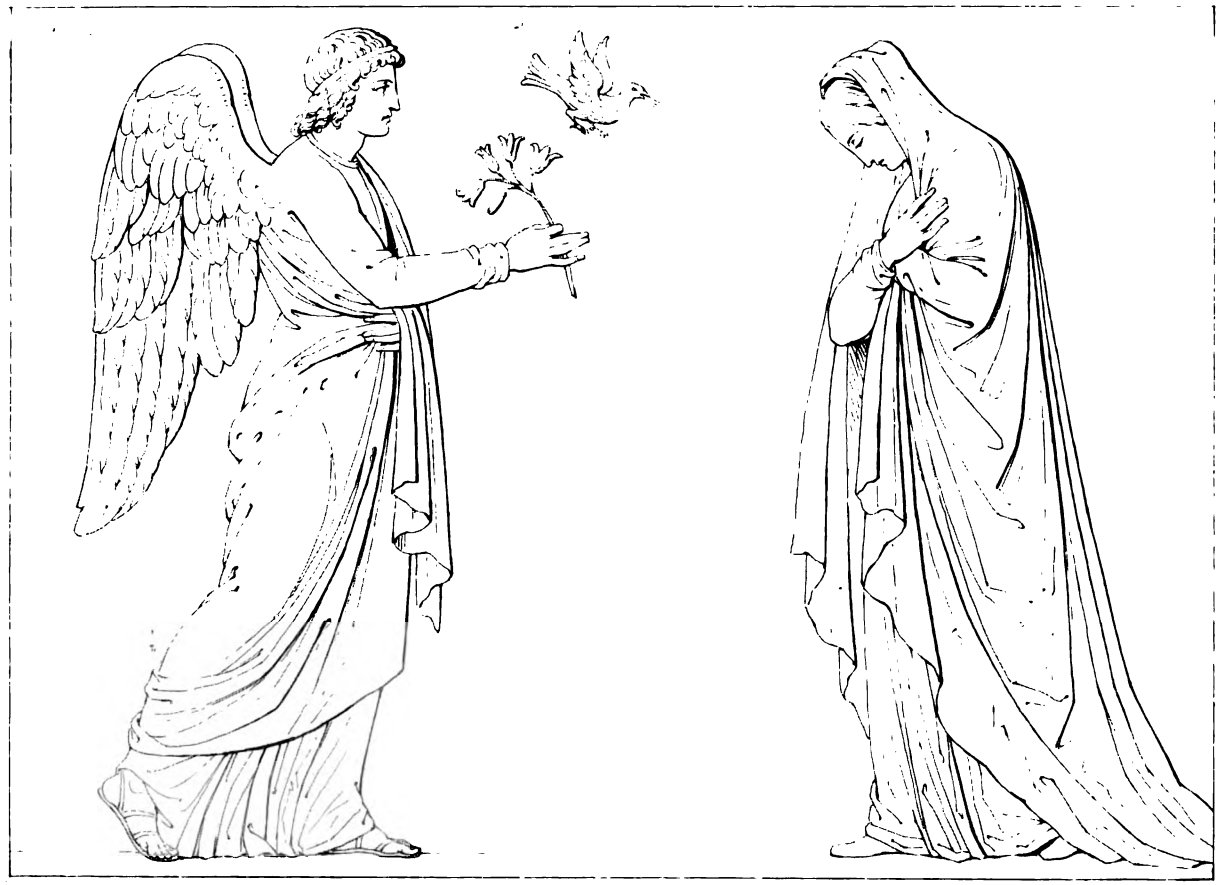
THE fourth metope has for its subject that most signal proof of obedience, and requiring the most entire confidence in the divine justice—the offering by Abraham of his son Isaac. Directed by God to take the child of his old age, and to slay him for a sacrifice on mount Moriah, he suppresses every tender paternal affection, and sets out immediately to obey the divine command: the point of time in this affecting story which the artist has chosen, is when the voice from heaven, calling upon Abraham by name, presents the completion of the sacrifice. The innocent victim still kneels unresistingly on the altar; still the left hand of the father presses down the head of his son, while his right lifts the dreadful knife, and all his

Digitized by Google

figure retains the strenuous action which it had acquired in the exercise of this painful effort of duty; but his face is eagerly turned towards the heavenly voice, and shews wonder and dawning hope, mingling with the dire feelings which had previously agitated it: the apparent rapidity of this action, and his intent gaze towards the point whence the sound proceeds, gives so great a reality to the expression, that we almost imagine we hear the heavenly voice issuing from the clouds; the hand, too, in the right corner of the metope, giving expressness to the command, and below, the ram which is to be the substituted sacrifice, add greatly to the clearness and effect of this composition. The form of the son has all the beauty and grace of youthfulness; that of Abraham, though bearing the marks of years, retains the strength and robustness which is attributed, even in old age, to those of the patriarchal times.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE ANNUNCIATION.

Digitized by Google

THE ANNUNCIATION.

This is the first of three bas-reliefs, the subjects of which are taken from the New Testament. It represents the Annunciation at that point of time, when the angel Gabriel having communicated his heavenly message, the Holy Virgin yields herself submissively to the divine will, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Every part of this composition is full of grace and expression; and the action of the angel, presenting with his right hand the spotless lily, emblem of her purity, is perfectly beautiful. The attitude of Mary, also, her hands crossed, in token of veneration on her breast, and humbly inclining before the divine messenger, finely expresses her entire submission and obedience. The drapery also is very elegant, and well adapted to their respective characters.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE VISITATION.

Digitized by Google

THE VISITATION.

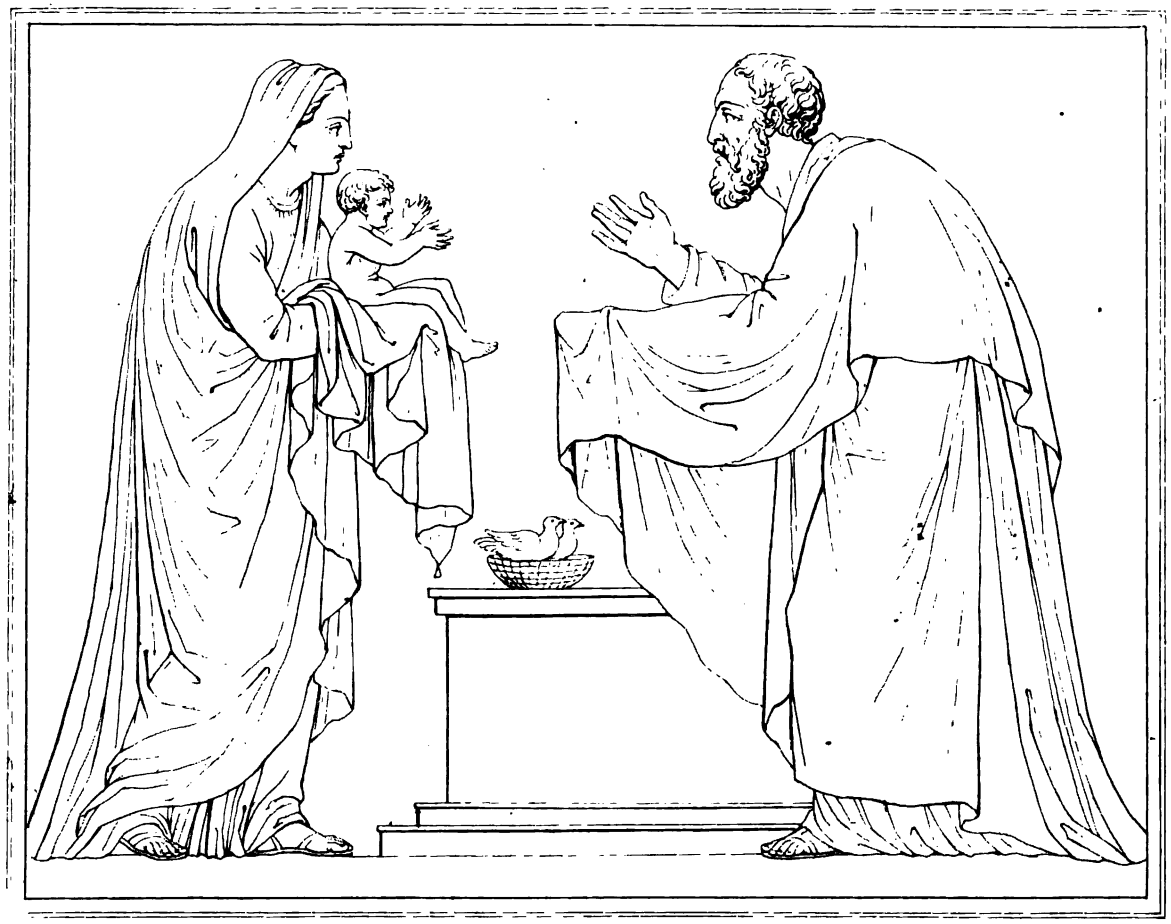
THE subject of the sixth metope is the meeting of this Holy Virgin and Elizabeth, at the threshold of the latter's house. The aged Elizabeth, clad in a tunic and mantle, and wearing on her head the dress of the Hebrew women, descends in haste to receive her divine guest; extending her hands fondly and respectfully towards her, she seems to exclaim, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me!"

Mary also clothed in a tunic and mantle which descends from the crown of the head, bending gracefully forward to receive her salutation, seems about to utter her divine reply. The time-worn countenance of Elizabeth, contrasts strongly with the fresh and spotless youth of the Holy Virgin, whose countenance is all softness and humility, tinged, however, with a light shade of melancholy.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Engraved by Henry Moses

THE PRESENTATION.

THE PRESENTATION.

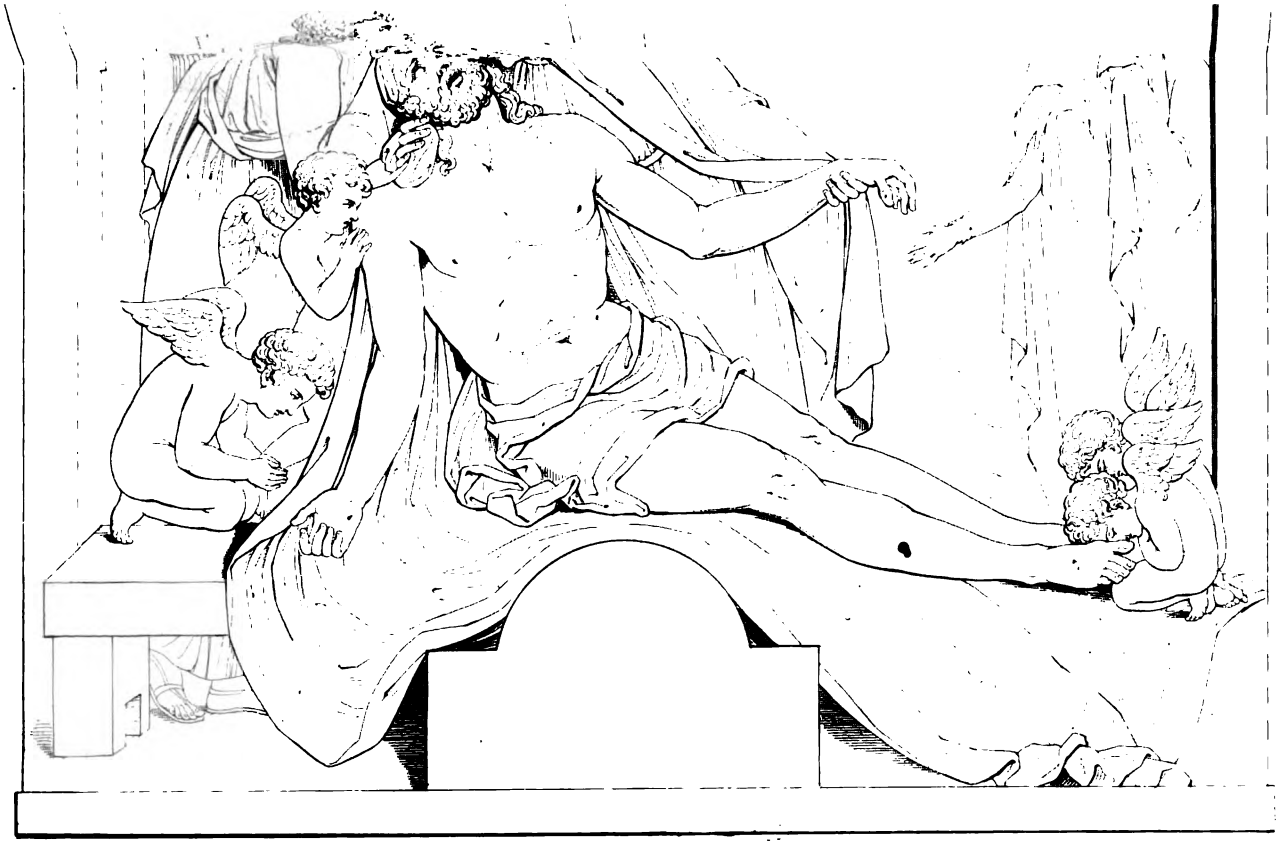
CANOVA has admirably produced in this piece that expression of lively tenderness and devotional feeling which accords with the subject. The Virgin Mother, in an attitude of humility and veneration, presents the infant Jesus to old Simeon, whose prophetic soul recognises in the child before him the long promised Messiah; and who is about to utter that joyous address to God—"Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," &c. The artist, whom no source of effect escaped, has finely expressed the exalted character of the infant, by the reverent manner in which the Virgin presents him, resting upon folds of fine linen, and also by that with which the old prophet raises the skirt of his robe to receive him, extending at the same time his arms towards him with a countenance beaming joy and exultation: the heavenly child seems not only free from alarm at the bearded face and venerable aspect of the old man, but raises his little hands, as if to accept his tender advances.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Antonio Canova sculpt.

DEPOSITION FROM THE CROSS.

Etched by Henry Moses.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

(ALTO RILIEVO IN MARBLE.)

CANOVA has more than once employed his art on this event of our sacred history: it is the subject of one of his latest and most celebrated works—La Pietà: it is also the subject of the painting which adorns the altar of the Church at Possagno, the largest work he ever executed in that branch of art. The present composition is in high relief, and is placed in the private chapel of the Venetian patrician, Count Antonio Widiman. It is not, however, entirely the work of Canova, the execution in marble having been confided to Antonio D'Este, a Roman sculptor; but the composition and modelling are wholly the production of his genius and hand; and further, as the closest ties of friendship and intimacy subsisted between him and D'Este, it may be concluded that the work had the advantage of being finished under the paternal care and guidance of its author. The scene is Mount Calvary, and the foot of the Cross; the principal figures of the group are the dead Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostle John; besides these, several little Angels or Cherubs, in various actions of grief and veneration, and three

Digitized by Google

women who stand at a distance weeping, add to the deeply-impassioned and pathetic character of the group. The body of Christ has just been lowered from the cross; it is yet soft and flexible, and, though possessing all the lifeless abandonment of limbs, has not yet assumed the rigid forms and impressive aspect of death. The upper part is raised and supported by his mother, with a tenderness and veneration of manner suitable to the mingled influence of maternal and religious feelings. Her look betokens the most deep and poignant affliction, a fixed and absorbing sorrow, which words and tears have long since ceased to relieve. Close beside them stands the favourite Apostle, his hands clasped, and eyes raised with sorrowful but pious expression towards heaven, which seems to open for its inhabitants to behold and weep over the event. The actions of the subordinate figures, the angels and the women who stand apart weeping, all tend to heighten the interest and effect of this deeply-affecting scene. It is to be regretted, that in the execution of this work, (misled by the plausible notion of a still greater approximation to nature,) the attempt has been made of giving to the marble, by means of washes and other applications, a variety of tints in the drapery and fleshy parts, and the soft harmonious hue which age confers. These means Canova himself made trial of in the early part of his

Digitized by Google

study, taking the hints from some notices of such things by the ancients; but his sound taste soon convinced him of their falseness, and he wholly abandoned them; producing by the fair resources of his art alone, and without means which the austere genius of sculpture disdains to borrow from her sister art, the softest and most breathing appearances of nature and vitality.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova sculpt. Engraved by Henry Moses.

DIRCE

Published by Septimus Prowett 62 Paternoster Row

Digitized by Google

DIRCE.

(A STATUE IN MARBLE.)

THE attitude of this Bacchic Nymph, lying on a tiger-skin, and leaning half raised on the mystic basket, is highly favourable to the display of her very lovely figure. With her head turned towards her right shoulder, she seems intently to regard some object at a distance, perhaps her fellow-dancers in the Trieteric sports approaching; for one of whom she has prepared an ivy chaplet, held in her right hand. The aspect of this nymph, suitably with her character of a Bacchante, is somewhat bold and free, and her beauty of a less ideal kind than that which Canova has generally bestowed on his mythologic female subjects, Nymphs, Muses, &c. whose expressions are usually of a more unimpassioned and ethereal cast: but if more human, and less a divinity, still her fine person produces all the fascination of the most perfect female loveliness. Description would, however, wholly fail in producing these effects which are experienced by the beholder of that soft flowing and delicately-moulded figure, that flexible incurvation, so natural and graceful, of the left side, formed by her reclining posture, or that

Digitized by Google

bosom which so directly reminds us of that highly-poetical passage in the Orlando :

> " Bianca neve è il bel collo e'l petto latte ;
> Il collo è tondo, il petto colmo e largo :
> Due poma acerbe, e pur d'avorio . . . . fatte,
> Vengono e van, com'onda al primo margo
> Quando piacevol aura il mar combatte."
>
> ARIOSTO.

This work is one of those which were unfortunately left incomplete by the death of Canova; the upper part alone of the marble statue having been finished; the lower part, however, much advanced: under these circumstances it was obtained by his Britannic Majesty, and with correct taste required to be delivered in the exact state in which it was left by the chisel of Canova.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt. Engraved by Henry Moses

ALLEGORICAL FIGURE OF THE CITY OF PADUA

Published by Septimus Prowett, Pall Mall, 1816.

Digitized by Google

THE CITY OF PADUA.

(BASSO RILIEVO IN MARBLE.)

THIS bas-relief which adorns the Hospital of the city of Pádua, was executed by Canova, at the desire of the citizens of that place, in honor of Nicolo Antonio Guistiniani their bishop, by whom that excellent asylum for sickness and poverty was instituted.

It is sculptured on a slab of Carrara marble, measuring about five feet by three, surmounted by an elegant cornice; the subject is an allegorical representation of the city of Padua, in the form of a young and handsome matron, (the lineaments of age being unfavourable to the purposes of art) who is in the act of recording the name of her benefactor. She is seated on an elegant chair of an antique form, and resting her feet on a step or footstool; her left hand supports a tablet which rests on her knee, and on which she is inscribing the last letter of the name of Guistiniani. Her action is graceful and dignified, and her countenance, which possesses the Grecian cast of beauty, is animated and improved by the noble sentiment of gratitude; which seems to occupy her mind, as she repeats to herself, with complacency, the name of which her pen

Digitized by Google

has just finished the tracing: she is clothed in ample and flowing drapery, which is so disposed, however, as not wholly to conceal her fine form; the left arm and part of the bosom, and also the lower part of the right arm, being left free for the execution of the task on which she is engaged; her hair is confined by an encircling band, from which, however, a long tress or two escapes and falls gracefully down her neck behind; her head is also adorned by the appropriate municipal symbol—the turretted crown. A winged boy or genius supports the tablet on which she is writing, and pushes round his little playful face from behind with a look of interest and intelligence, in the act in which she is engaged. The caduceus and the owl, poised in the air, are introduced in allusion to the learning and science of which this city, by its famous university, has long been the seat. Nor should the slight work which adorns the footstool be passed over unnoticed; it is Antenor, their Trojan founder, marking out with a ploughshare the limits of the intended city; beside him are his armed followers, while on the other side are seen the inhabitants who seem to express joy and gratitude at the event; these little figures are only slightly touched by the hand of Canova, and are in very low relief, but possess that truth and harmony of expression with which genius, however slight its means, never fails to invest its subject.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova sculpt. Engraved by Henry Moses.

PHILOSOPHY.

London Published by Sigdr and Prowett [illegible]

Digitized by Google

PHILOSOPHY.

(A MARBLE COLOSSAL BUST.)

When we consider the innumerable and invaluable benefits for which man is indebted to Philosophy, we must value and admire the fine thought of Canova of embodying and presenting to our senses the image of this benefactress of the human race. Philosophy is here represented in the character of the enlightener of man, and the source of every thing which contributes to his dignity, his happiness, and to his highest interests. As a work of art it exhibits in a high degree the fine conception and masterly skill of the sculptor: her countenance is illumined with the sacred love of truth; her large and penetrating eyes, placed close beneath her brows, seem to traverse all nature in search of food for her insatiable mind—the dignity of her nature is seen in the noble air of confidence which reposes on her countenance, while at the same time the slightly inflated nostrils and lips, which seem about to utter some lofty truth, indicate that curiosity and mental activity which attend the love and pursuit of

Digitized by Google

knowledge. A broad diadem, suiting her dignity of Queen, encircles her brows, and is adorned with stars; and in the centre with the sun, the symbol of the enlightening power of Philosophy. An ample veil covers her head, and descends majestically on each shoulder, concealing, in part, her smooth tresses, two of which escaping, fall down artlessly on each side, and shade the neck; a tunic, the ample folds of which are seen below the neck, appears also to clothe the whole of her person. Who else but thyself, O Philosophy, could inspire the mind, and guide the hand of the sculptor, who has thus portrayed thy bright and consoling image!

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ADONIS

Digitized by Google

ADONIS.

(A PLASTER MODEL.)

THE group of Venus and Adonis, of which this head formed a part, was an earlier composition than that executed for the Marquess Berio, and given in a former part of this work. Canova was, it appears, dissatisfied with his model, and destroyed it, with the exception of the part which is presented in this plate. It cannot therefore be supposed that the whole group was of equal merit, but as it is the nature of a great mind to be dissatisfied with every thing which falls short of its own high conceptions, it is not improbable that we have great cause to regret the destruction of this group. Whether it be so or not we have reason to rejoice at the preservation of this interesting fragment, which presents a most perfect image of fresh and luxuriant youth; a narrow band encircles his head, confining his thick and glossy hair, which falls in richly-curling ringlets over his neck and temples, and adds a wonderful grace and softness to his countenance. The expression of this head of Adonis is very different from that in the second group, in which an air of indifference and satiety has been noticed and objected to:

Digitized by Google

this, on the contrary, unites to all the lustre of the most perfect youthful beauty, the most bland and seducing expression of countenance; the other may be perfect in respect to the character intended to be expressed by the sculptor, but this is in itself more pleasing, and will be more generally admired.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A MUSE.

Digitized by Google

SAPPHO.

(IN THE CLAY MODEL.)

In speaking of the celebrated Sappho the poets have mostly alluded to her neglected passion for Phaon, and to her unfortunate fate; subjects favorable to the excitement of that deep emotion which it is the chief purpose of poetry to produce; but Canova, who has been justly styled the sculptor of the gentler affections, chose rather the period of early youth and untarnished beauty for the indulgence of his imagination, and the purposes of his art. Here he has presented us with the image of the fair Lesbian girl, the first smiles of love and hope playing upon her lips, and with eyes beaming only with visions of glory and of pleasure. The inconstancy of Phaon, and her own too ardent and impassioned nature, soon made pale, we are told, the fresh roses of that cheek, and threw a darkening veil over that playful smile; nor could the plaints of her melodious lyre, or her poetic fame, bring back her beautiful and inconstant lover. A band, narrow where it meets on her smooth forehead, and widening behind, confines her rich and undulating tresses; her fresh cheek, her soft glance, and lips just opening with a

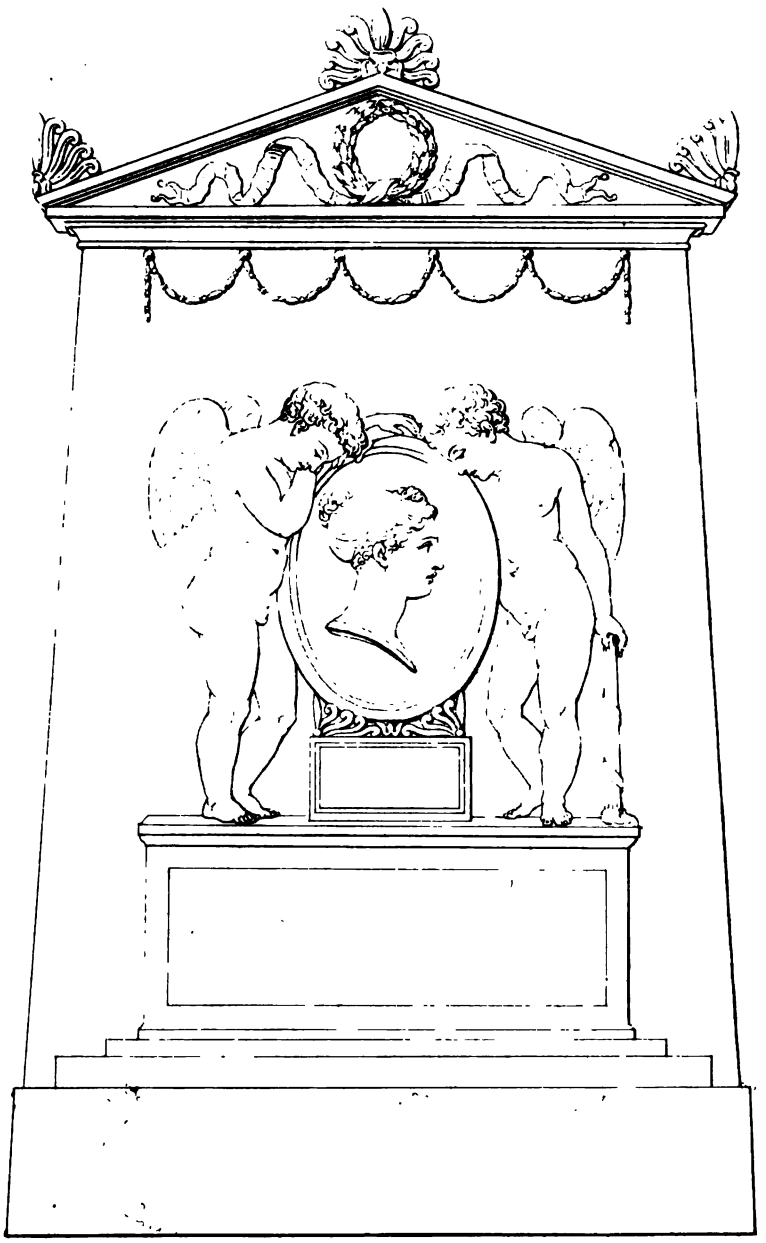
Digitized by Google

smile, all harmonize delightfully, and express her tender and enthusiastic character.

Note—On the plate Sappho is, by mistake, called a Muse—an accidental recurrence to the flattery of her own times, by which she was styled the tenth Muse.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



A SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT

SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT.

(IN MARBLE.)

" Tacito vo, che le parole morte
Farian pianger le gente : ed i' desio
Che le lagrime mie si spargan sole."

PETRARCA, s. 16.

THE story of this monument is unknown : the amiable woman at whose instances it has been raised on the banks of the Olona having chosen to involve its purpose in a veil of mystery, the respect due to grief will not allow me to attempt to penetrate this concealment; knowing that sorrow the most pure and legitimate, sometimes shrinks from notice, and that the mourner may find in solitude alone a solace for her deep and incommunicable feelings. This small tomb is a marble slab, with a medallion in the middle, in which is sculptured the bust of a young and beautiful female; two youthful genii, or angels, with joined hands, bend weeping over the medallion, their boyish forms possessing all the peculiar grace of that early age which this artist is used to give to these subjects.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A MUSE.

(BUST IN MARBLE.)

This bust was executed for the Countess of Albany, and intended to be placed in her charming residence, on the banks of the Arno, a place which awakens at once such dear and bitter recollections*.

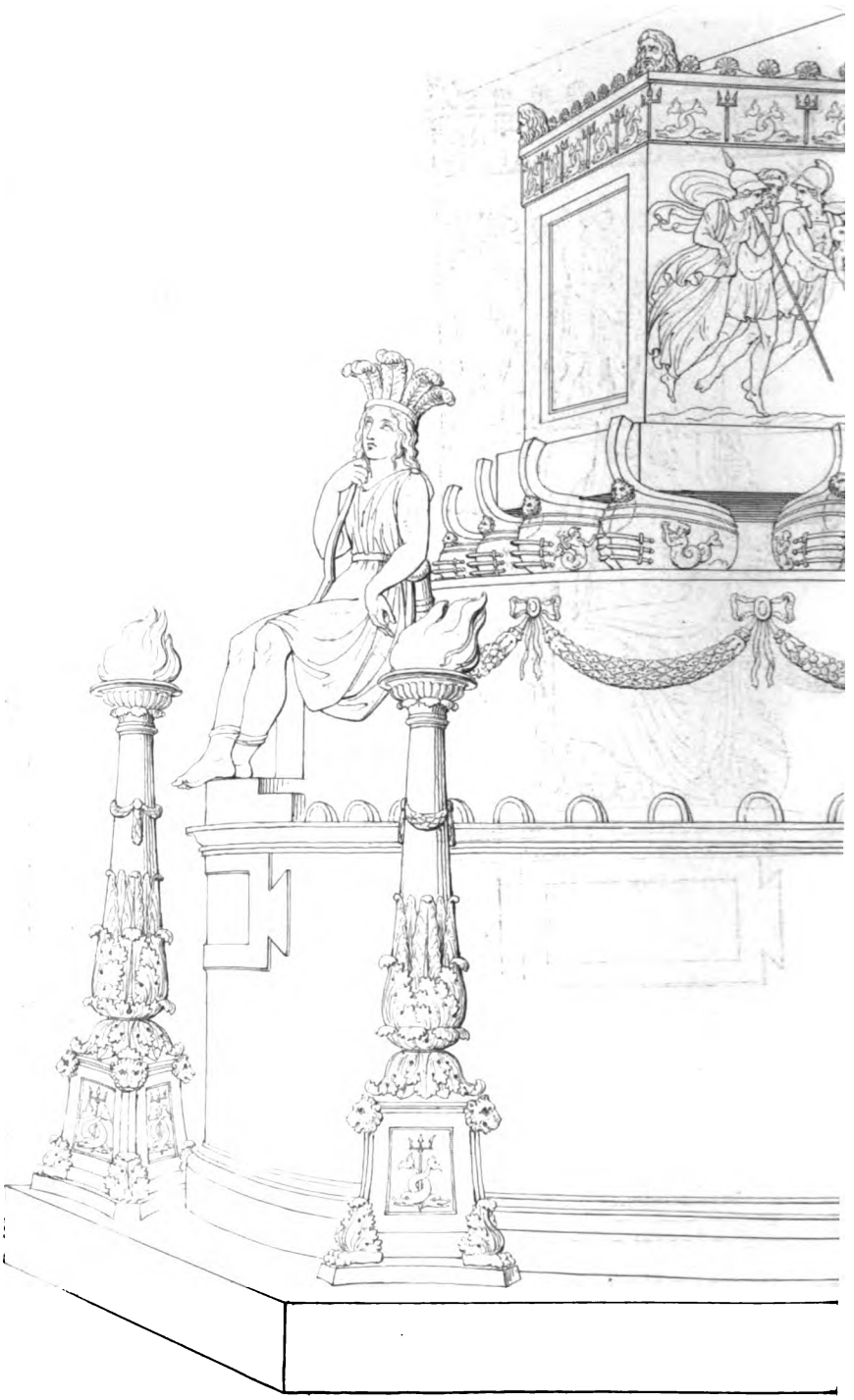
With such an object Canova, who so fully appreciate the high qualities of others, though so unconscious of his own, must have felt all his powers excited to the task. Attired with Grecian simplicity and elegance, and without any symbol of her attributes, the pure and serene expression of her countenance alone sufficiently reveals the more than mortal nature of one of the chaste daughters of Mnemosyne.

* It was here that Alfieri resided during the latter years of his life.

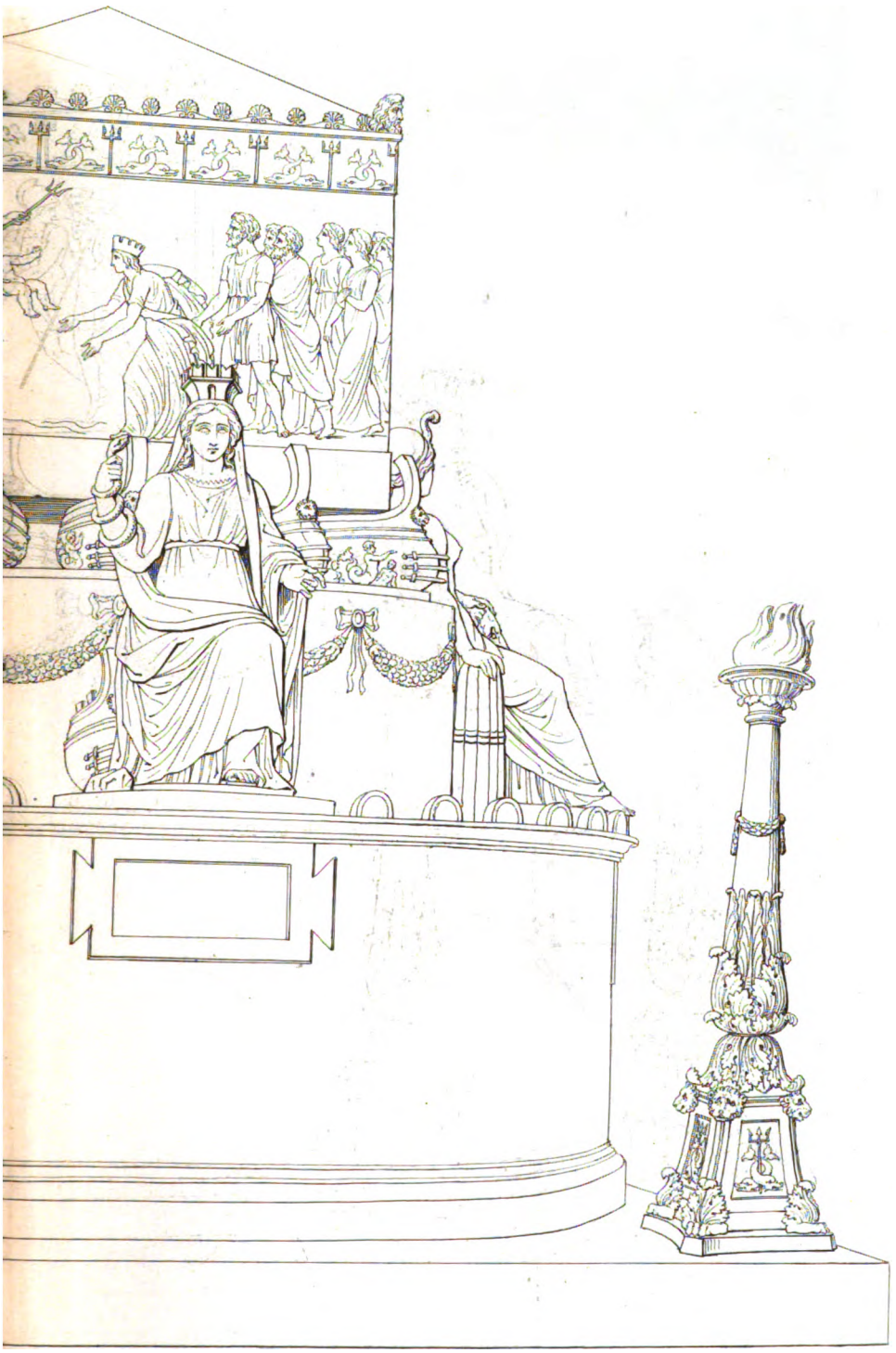
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



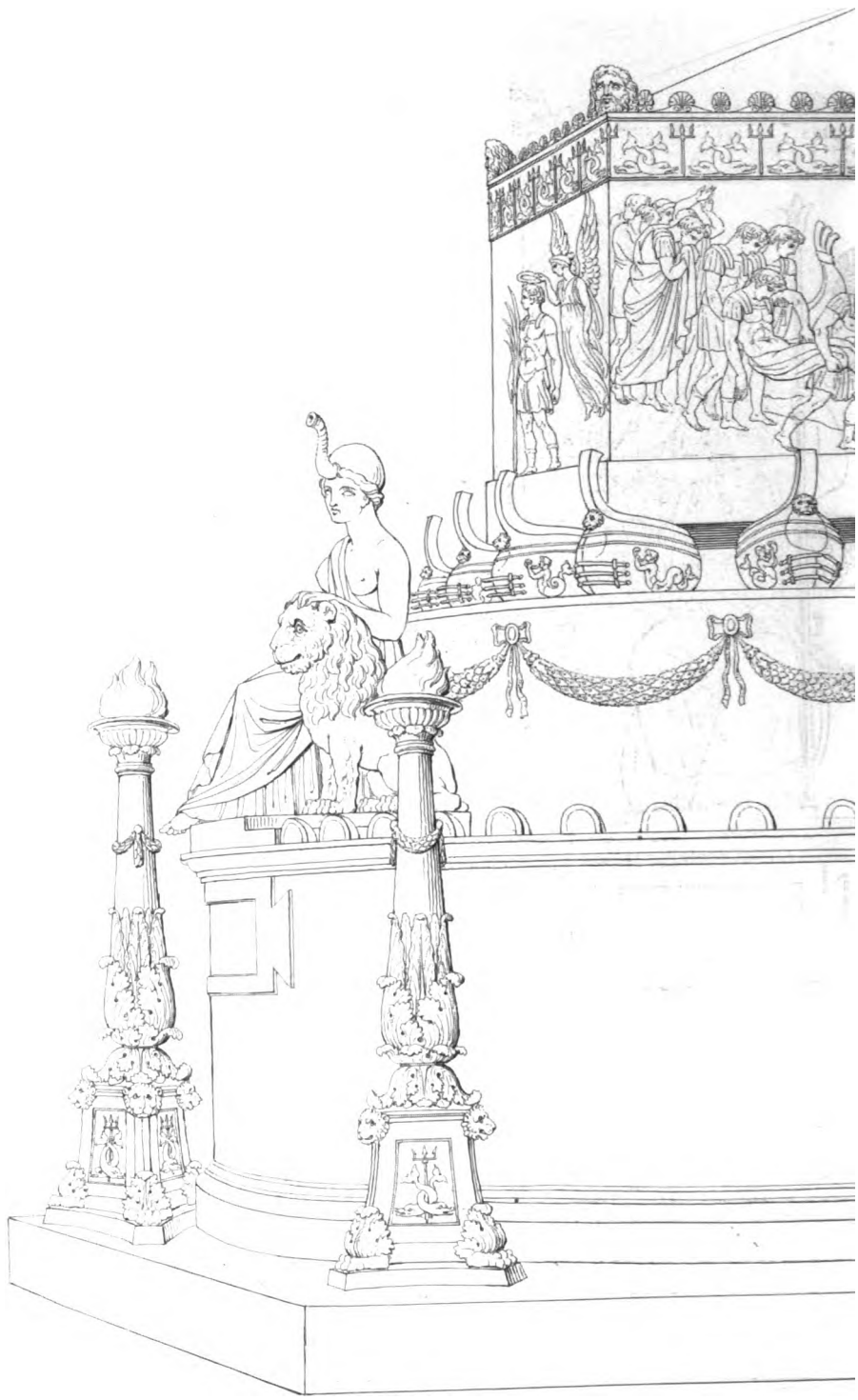
Engraved by Henry M[illegible]

NT OF NELSON. Plate 1.

Digitized by Google

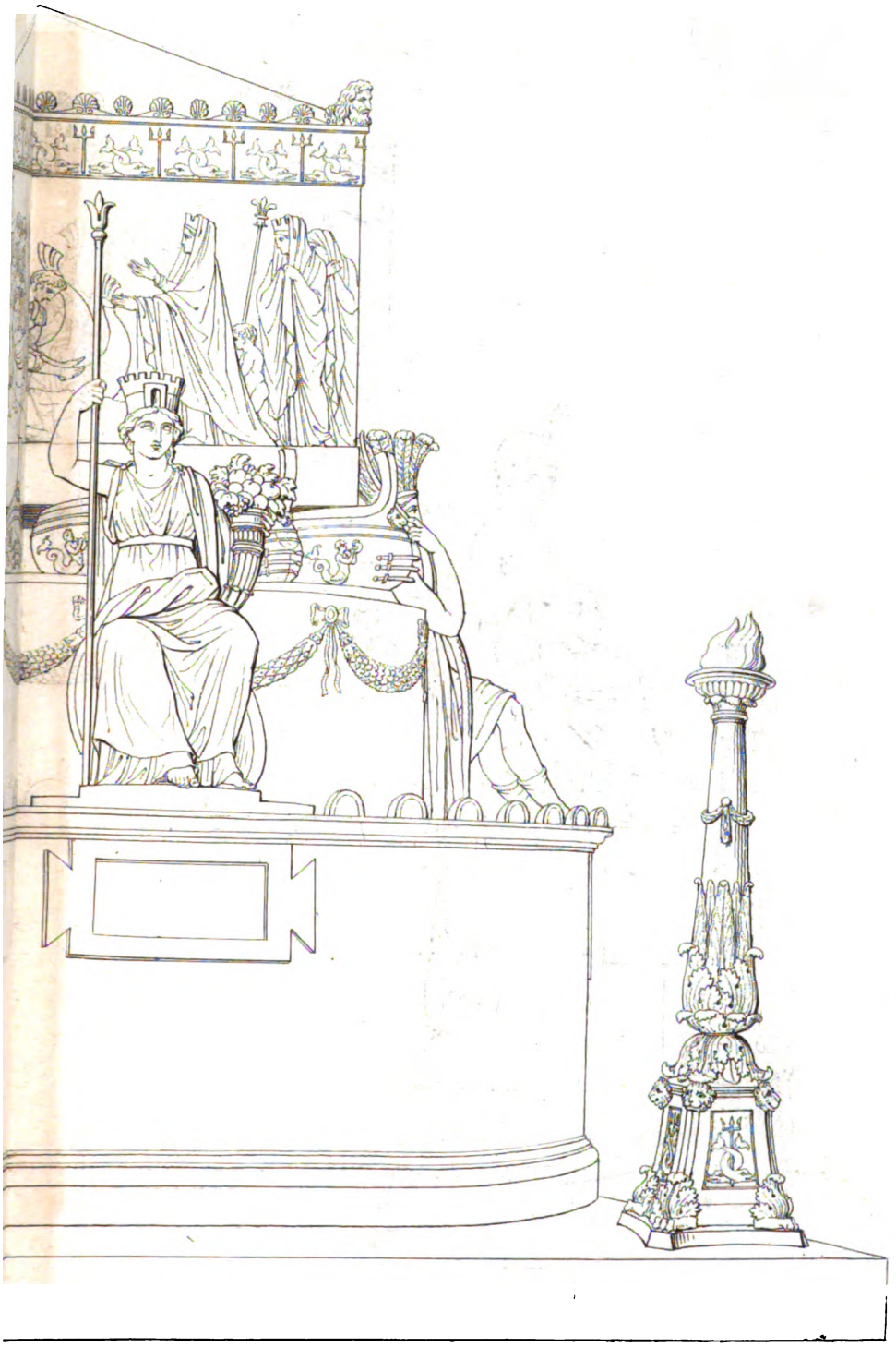
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



SEPULCHRAL MONU

Digitized by Google



Engraved by Henry Moses

ENT OF NELSON. Plate 2.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT OF NELSON.

(A MODEL IN PLASTER.)

THIS grand composition I notice with more pleasure on account of its furnishing in itself alone a triumphant refutation of the charge which has been made against Canova, of a deficiency in inventive genius. This criticism is, I believe, founded on the general resemblance to be found in his sepulchral monuments; in which a bust merely, or a weeping figure moulded by his hand, fully satisfied the wishes and objects of those who desired to preserve the memory of departed friends, by uniting it with that of Canova. The accompanying outlines will convey, far better than mere description, an idea of the form and effect of this magnificent composition. It is an isolated monument, and one of the few instances of a successful adoption of that grand style of art in modern times; compared with the most celebrated of these, the tomb of Pietro di Toledo, at Naples, by Nola; and that of Julius II. by Michel Angelo, it will be found that Nelson's is superior to both in grandeur, in simplicity, and in the clearness of its purposes and allusions, unaided by forced allegory and abstractions. It consists of a square basement, supporting a large circular base, or

Digitized by Google

plinth; then a smaller circular base, and lastly the sarcophagus itself, resting on hulls of ships of an antique form. On the lower plinth are seated four colossal female figures, representing the four divisions of the globe, at the foot of each a tablet, on which the victories of the hero are to be inscribed; at the angles of the basement are four highly ornamental candelabra, exactly adapted, by their tripod form, to the place they occupy. The sarcophagus is of large dimensions, and highly adorned with a frieze and cornice, and subjects treated in bas-relief. On one side Minerva, Neptune, and Mars are descending to present the infant Nelson to Britannia, figured as a dignified matron, wearing the turretted crown, who bends forward with joyous alacrity to receive it; behind is a crowd of both sexes, who shew by their attitudes a similar feeling. On the other principal side the dead body of Nelson is being brought on shore by his sorrowing companions; intending to shew, perhaps, by subjects taken from the two extremes of life, that his whole existence was devoted to glory and to his country. Three majestic matrons, emblems of the three kingdoms, approach to meet it, and express by their attitudes the deepest affliction; Britannia precedes the others, and extends her arms towards the lifeless hero; a little genius behind supports her trident. On one side front the hero is being crowned by a winged victory—the other is left for the inscription of the par-

Digitized by Google

liamentary expression of the public sorrow at his death. This grand work, which unites the eloquent spirit of Greece with Roman magnificence, does equal honour both to the genius and to the character of Canova, being a spontaneous tribute of his admiration of the British hero; produced too at a time when Italy herself was depressed by the severest political evils, and the actual domination of the nation to which Nelson ever shewed an almost personal hatred.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Ant.o Canova Sculp.

ROME.

Engraved by Henry Moses

CHEV.r AZARA.

Published by Septima Prowett 62 Paternoster Row.

Digitized by Google

ROME,

AN ALLEGORICAL HEAD, AND BUST OF THE CHEVALIER AZARA.

(MEDALLIONS.)

THE two heads which are here presented as medallions originally formed part of a bas-relief, composed for the city of Padua, in honour of Girolamo Guistiniani, who was Podestà of that city from the year 1794 to 1796: political events, however, prevented the completion of this work, and it was left in the clay model; shortly afterward the Chevalier Azara, then Spanish Minister at the Papal Court, rendered the most valuable services to that state on the occasion of a treaty with the French Government, and excited the deep gratitude of the Roman people. Besides being inscribed among their citizens, Canova, who felt deeply interested in the affairs of his adopted country, was employed to adapt the above-mentioned work to the purposes of the occasion, changing the figure of Padua to that of Rome, and substituting Azara for Guistiniani. The relievo thus altered was engraved, and the plates distributed, but the work itself was finally left in the model; from this the bust of the allegorical figure of Rome and that of Azara have been taken, and are now presented in

Digitized by Google

this form. The city of Rome is here figured as a young and beautiful female, wearing a helmet, on which is the story of the twin founders of the city, to distinguish her from a Minerva; even in this minute representation Canova has expressed, particularly in the attitude of the she-wolf, who seems to regard the two infants with the tenderest regard, those gentle affections which he possessed in so great a degree; which it is so difficult to suppress where they exist, or feign where they do not. From beneath the helmet her hair escaping shades with its short ringlets her ample forehead and temples, while its longer tresses flow down the neck behind. The other head presents an exact likeness of the Chevalier Azara: although his subject was advanced in years, the sculptor has so used the resources of his art as to raise the character of his work without sacrificing the faithfulness required in a portrait. Its style is that of an antique head, and its execution not unworthy of antiquity.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GIUSEPPE BOSSI

GUISEPPE BOSSI.

(COLOSSAL BUST IN MARBLE.)

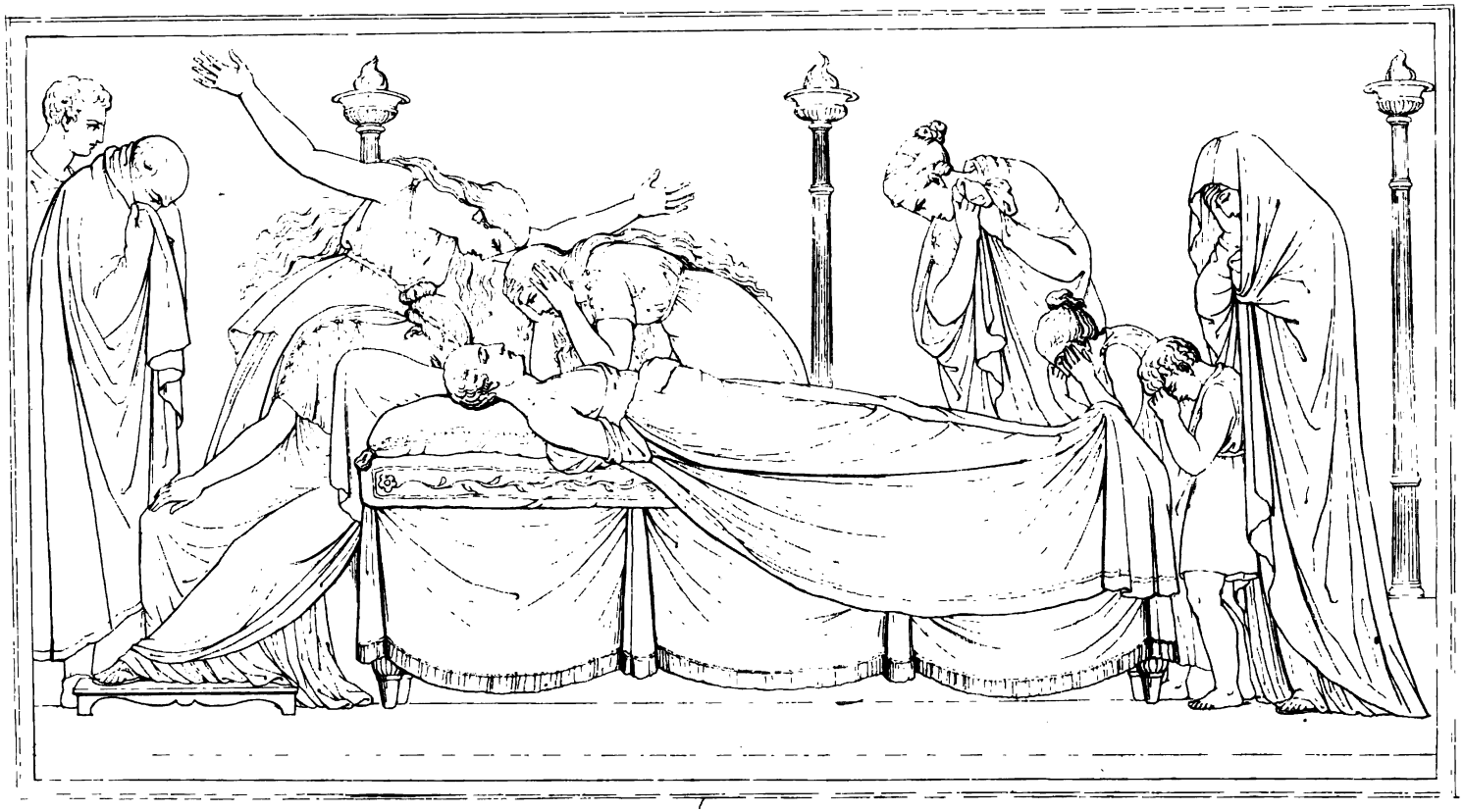
THE subject of this bust was greatly endeared to Canova by his genius, his sensibility, and his enthusiasm for the arts; and far other tribute than that of sorrowing tears had the sculptor hoped to bestow on his young friend, whose immature death was so great a misfortune to Italy and to the arts. The productions of Bossi, particularly distinguished by fine drawing and composition, and his erudite writings on the arts, will preserve his name with posterity, nor will it be a less honourable means of immortality that Canova sculptured, with an afflicted heart, this bust of his friend. He has faithfully preserved in it the noble and intelligent features of the original, his lofty sentiment, his gentle, and at the same time animated soul; in the slight contraction of the brows, the large eyes, and the lips, we trace his elevated mind, mingled with a certain expression of sadness. Bossi was of a large and well-proportioned stature, and prepossessing aspect, but with apparent strength he had a constitutional delicacy, and susceptibility of fibre which could not long support the workings of his too ardent feelings and active

Digitized by Google

imagination. His death happened in the flower of his life, and when the most smiling prospects lay before him; but it must be our consolation to reflect, as the longest life is a mere point of time, how infinitely more important it is to have secured a fame that will in after ages dispel the obscurity of the tomb.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



MONUMENT OF THE MARQUESS SALSA BERIO

Digitized by Google

MONUMENT OF THE MARQUESS SALSA BERIO.

(IN THE MODEL.)

THIS affecting composition is the principal ornament of the solemn tomb, which is to be raised to the memory of the late Marquess Salsa Berio, of Naples. It is a death-bed scene, in Mezzo-rilievo, and represents the deceased stretched out on his funeral couch, and surrounded by his family and domestics. Every thing around is expressive of grief and distraction, and powerfully awakens the sympathy of the beholder. Among the numerous figures which compose this afflicted group, three females more especially attract our notice and commiseration; these, as also the more subordinate persons, are sufficiently marked by the discriminating hand of genius, to enable us to discover the various relations they bore to the deceased. She who bends over him, clasping her hands to her temples, and gazes eagerly in his lifeless countenance, is his mother; her figure and attitude, her negligent attire and loosened hair, strongly mark the despair of an aged parent, who beholds the untimely death of a beloved son, the constant object of a mother's love, and comfort

Digitized by Google

of her declining years. The attitude of the wife, who is seated at the head of the bed, is expressive of a deep and absorbing affliction; she is partly reclining on the couch, her face buried in her dress, and nearly touching that of her deceased husband. The other figure is the daughter, whose grief partakes of the terror and distraction so natural to a young person inexperienced in scenes of affliction, and who witnesses, perhaps for the first time, the appalling aspect of death in the person of her lifeless parent. At the foot of the bier are two children, sons of the deceased, and two females, who mingle their sorrows with that of the afflicted family: at the other extremity of the rilievo are two figures, apparently domestics; the younger gazes on the scene with a look of consternation, rather, however, in the character of a spectator than of a participator in the general feeling; but the other, more in years, and to whom it is probable the deceased is endeared by a long course of kindness, is truly an actor and partaker of the family grief. These secondary persons, far from disturbing the unity of the composition, greatly promote the general effect by their subdued and appropriate expression, and by the harmonious relation they bear to the principal figures of the group. The style of this work is nearly that of the old Italian masters, especially it approaches to that of Donatello, whose manner Canova chose in this instance to adopt. The

Digitized by Google

affections accordingly are here expressed with much force and natural effect; the forms too partake of the modest simplicity which characterizes the works of that early period of modern art; slightly raised, however, by the addition of the nobleness and grace which are derived from more general and ideal standards of beauty than then prevailed.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antonio Canova Sculpt.

Engraved by Henry Moses

MADONNA.

London Published by Septimus Prowett 69 Pall Mall 1827

Digitized by Google

A MADONNA.

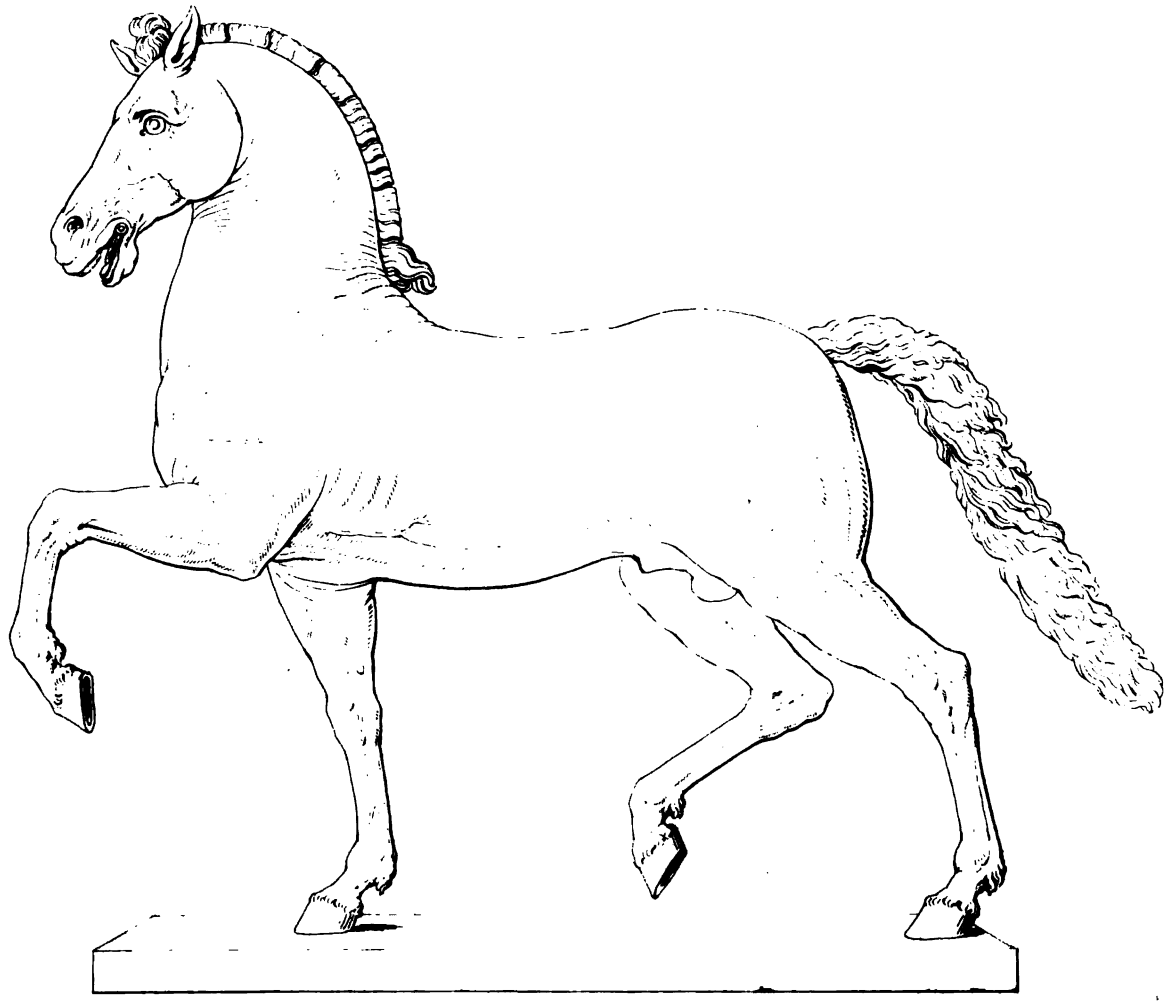
(A MARBLE BUST.)

In this bust Canova has performed the difficult task of representing the Holy Virgin in a state of repose, and without the aid of the usual accessories that express her sacred character and destiny: but it is not by those lovely contours only, and by those symmetrical features that the sculptor has effected his object; emulating the father of Italian poetry, by whom she is described "Umile ed alta piu che creatura," he must have raised his mind to the contemplation of heavenly beauty for that look of Paradise which her countenance possesses, and which will excite, in all those who call on her name, the warmest spirit of devotion.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



MODEL OF A COLOSSAL HORSE

Digitized by Google

A COLOSSAL HORSE.

(IN THE MODEL.)

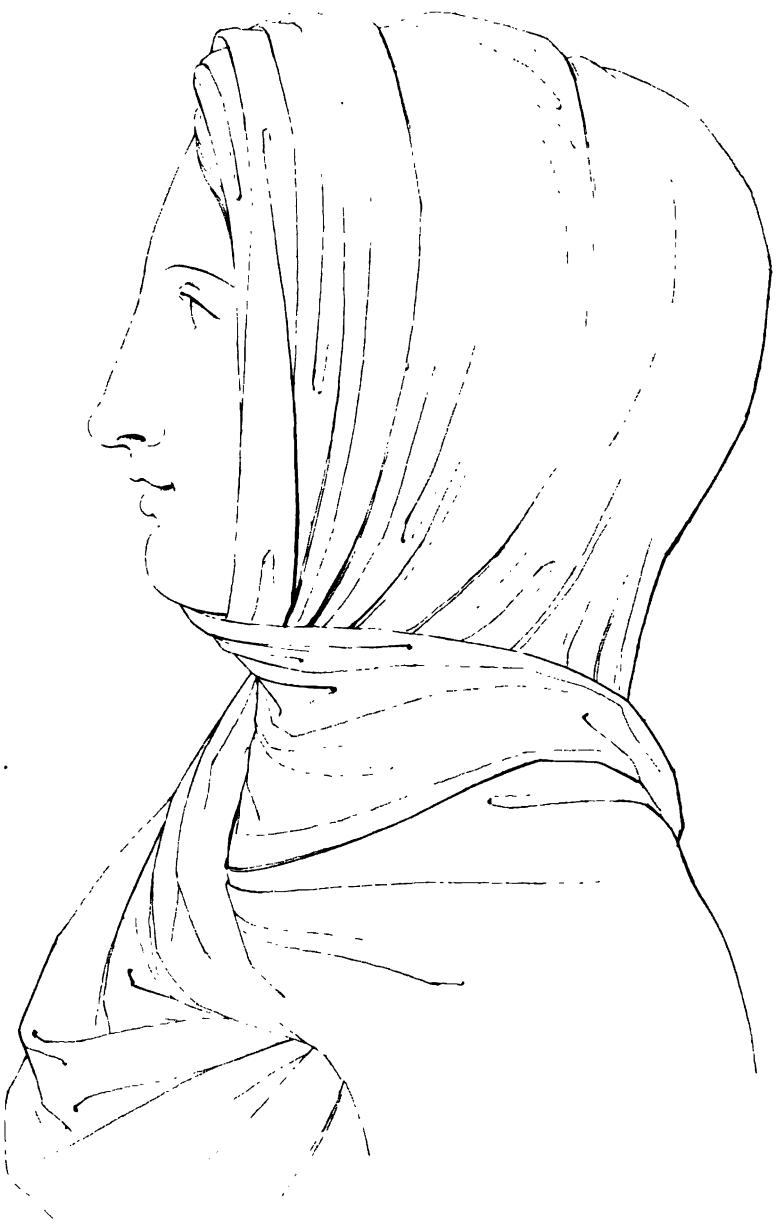
The colossal horse, of which this plate presents the outlines, is part of an intended equestrian statue in bronze of the late King of Naples, Ferdinand IV. At the death of Canova, so unfortunate in many respects for the arts, this work had proceeded no further than this model of the horse; it will, however, be completed by other hands, and is destined to be placed symmetrically with that of Charles III. of which a plate has been given in a former part of this work, on the grand Piazza at Naples. With the exception of the statue of Charles, this is the largest work of the kind in Europe; however admirable the former is, and it excited the admiration of all professors of art and of those most conversant with the forms and action of this noble animal, it must be allowed to be surpassed by the subject of the present plate. This noble steed is perfect, not only in his general figure, but also in the most minute and detailed parts, which are treated with all the science, spirit, and fine finish of this great

Digitized by Google

sculptor. Every limb and member is full of life, vigour, and agility; but especially the head, which may be thought to move and breathe, and seems to be in the act of neighing.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Antonio Cano[illegible] Sculpt[illegible]

Engraved by Henry Moses.

A VESTAL.

London, Published by Septimus [illegible]

Digitized by Google

A VESTAL.

(A HERMA IN MARBLE.)

CANOVA has more than once exercised his imagination on the idea of a Vestal virgin. The bust, or rather Herma, of one to which he applied the name of the Vestal Tuccia, has been already given in this work; the subject of the present plate is another, slightly varied from the former, and presented here in profile, but still preserving in common with the others the marks by which we recognise in them the virgin guardians of the sacred fire of Vesta. The veil worn in this manner is a distinguishing part of their dress: so finely and naturally is it treated, that one would almost believe it to be the soft and obedient folds of some delicate web which the tasteful hand of the artist had drawn round his figure. The general expression of the countenance is that of mildness and innocence, but with a slight cast of seriousness, which accords with the vigilant habits of her high and somewhat perilous office.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LUCREZIA D'ESTE.

(A MARBLE BUST.)

THIS animated bust is Lucrezia D'Este, daughter of Ercole II. the illustrious Duke of Ferrara. She was married to Francesco Maria della Rovero, Prince of Urbino, who in addition to other qualities was distinguished by so great personal beauty, that Raffaelle was pleased to preserve the memory of it by one of the figures in his famous "School of Athens:" the harmony of their union was not however of long duration. Very beautiful also is she who is brought back to life by this breathing bust: the forms of the countenance are Grecian, and the hair arranged with a simplicity and elegance that produce a charming effect.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Antoni Canova Sculpt.

Engraved by Henry M...

ENDYMION.

Published by Septimus Prowett & Lattermoster Row

Digitized by Google

ENDYMION.

(A STATUE IN MARBLE.)

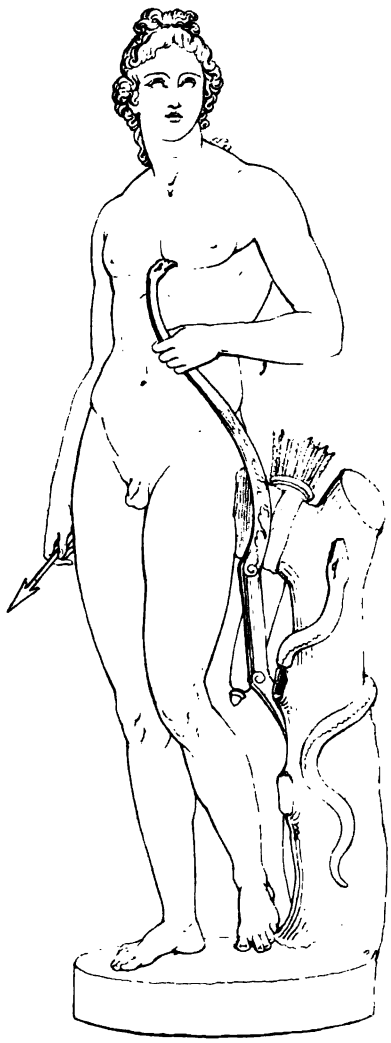
CANOVA has not deviated in this fine piece of sculpture from the usual manner of representing his subject. Endymion is lying asleep on a rock after the fatigues of the chase; his darts, fallen from his loosened hand, lie beside him; his dog, of the gentlest species of that animal, watches at his feet, impatient for the moment of his awakening, and ready to welcome it with caresses. The whole of his figure is impressed with the character of blooming, robust youth, and possesses a beauty the most bland and seducing; the countenance in particular, to which his thick clustering locks, falling in disordered profusion over his neck and temples, as if slightly moved by the air, add a wonderful softness and lustre. Though he sleeps, yet his frame seems fraught with life and sentiment; some dream perhaps is occupying his mind with its flattering illusions, which returning consciousness however is soon about to disperse. The representation of a youthful subject under the soft-dominion of sleep, was in a great measure an untried effort for our Sculptor; but he has admirably succeeded in it, and

Digitized by Google

has given to the figure of Endymion all that abandonment of limbs, that peculiar look of quiet and repose which attends the light slumbers of youth and health. By the artists and cognoscenti of Rome this work was considered to unite the simple grandeur and breadth of effect which characterize the productions of the Phidian School, with all the delicacy and minute graces of the most elaborate and highly-finished style of art.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



APOLLO.

Digitized by Google

APOLLO.

(A MARBLE STATUE.)

THIS small statue of the youthful Apollo, together with the kneeling Magdalen and the Terpsichore of Canova, forms a part of the collection of works of art which adorns the elegant residence of Count Sommariva at Paris. The subject of the present plate is only a slight variation from a Cupid which was given in the former part of this work, of which the present figure possesses all the seducing grace and beauty: the form and character, indeed, of Cupid so nearly agree with those of a young Apollo, that little more was required of the sculptor, in the conversion than the addition of the usual symbols of the god of light. He is standing beside the trunk of a tree, on which his quiver is hung, and against which he slightly rests with his thigh; his aspect is tranquil and complacent: the left hand holds his bow, and the right a shaft, but with no indication of being about to apply them to any hostile purpose; on the contrary, his look bespeaks a mind occupied only by the joyous and exulting feelings of youth, and its bright promises of glory and felicity.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

DUE DEC 01 '76 FA

MAY 16 '79

Digitized by Google